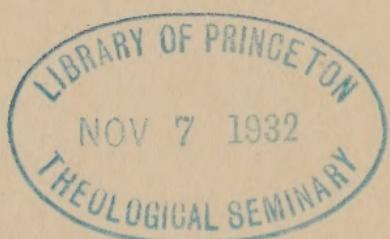


LIVES  
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# LIVES IN THE MAKING



# LIVES IN THE MAKING

AIMS AND WAYS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

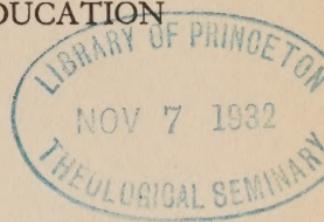
BY

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"MODERN YOUTH AND MARRIAGE"



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TO

JOHN LOVEJOY ELLIOTT



## PREFACE

EVERYWHERE to-day interest in character education is growing. Special courses in the subject are being offered in normal schools and colleges. Teachers and administrators, classes in civic education, in principles of education, in philosophy of education are studying the relation of their work to the shaping of excellent character. This book is planned to meet these needs by focusing light upon this paramount aim, by offering concrete suggestions for the daily procedure, by surveying the relations of the school life to the ideals and practices of home and community.

As here conceived, character education aims at much more than keeping children from crime. In one of his addresses Emerson voiced the hope that each of the young men before him would find his place in life by being "not content to slip along through the world like a footman or a spy, escaping by his nimbleness and apologies as many knocks as he could, but a brave and upright man, who must find or cut a straight road to everything excellent . . . , and not only go honorably himself, but make it easier for all who follow him, to go in honor and with benefit."

The plea is still timely. We hear much in these days about youthful delinquency. But necessary as it is to prevent wrong, to stop here would be like being satisfied with merely keeping out of the hands of the undertaker. Transgression is by no means the only obstacle to excellent living. In quite the largest group the more imminent peril is mediocrity, contentment with less than the best. Then there is also another group to-day that calls itself intelligent and emancipated but treats life's finer loyalties as matters

## P R E F A C E

about which it is bad form to be concerned. Both groups fall short; both miss the inspiration supplied by a lofty conception of the ends for which human gifts are spent most wisely.

This book is written with this more affirmative object in view. When it speaks of character, it has in mind something far more constructive than a life of "don'ts." It is the greatest of pities that ethical living is so often supposed to deal chiefly with restraints or with taking the zest out of life, when all the time its main business is the releasing of energy for the very best of uses. Even the traits or "virtues" listed in many a pronouncement on the subject, like perseverance, courage, truth-telling, are only means to the doing of the things most worth while. These, too, like skill in arithmetic or composition, it is better to regard not as ends, but as tools whose uses must be constantly inspired by certain highest, comprehensive purposes.

It is also better not to attack moral problems in isolation, by going after this or that specific trait or improvement by itself. To take but one instance, the best of efforts could not teach "honesty," let us say, as a separate achievement and then go on to "courage" or "community spirit." Even if character meant just adding up these and these traits, we could not get mere honesty without trying to get self-control, a genuine self-esteem, respect for the rights of others, and many other such attitudes. And, not least, all of these together would depend for their vitality upon the total view of what makes life upon this planet of ours ultimately worth the living.

Such creative ideas are indispensable. In recent years, etymology has been cited to remind us how morals are related to mores or customs. Why just this one kinship? Morals are also related to *morale*.

This is one reason why this book lays such stress as it does upon social remaking. Any philosophy of education

## P R E F A C E

which imagines that schools or homes operate in a sealed world of their own, without influence from prevailing community sentiments and practices, is miles away from the realities. And any outlook that separates "social" ethics from "personal" is equally misleading. The two are related organically. Excellent personality requires many a social change; and at the same time, the shaping of a better world exacts the lifelong labors of persons alive to this requirement and opportunity. Among these we should wish our young people to be enrolled. Achievement though it may be to keep many of them from being included among the wasters or destroyers, there can never be too many who appreciate the world's deepest needs and who want to make their lives contribute to meeting them.

The need might be stated in another way. Many plans for the making of lives draw up a given list of desirable traits and try to train for these in a world that apparently stands still. But the world is moving. Changes in the decades ahead may come at even a faster rate than before. Shall they be only changes, or shall they be progress? Especially shall they be progress in the sense of contributing to an ever higher type of personality, what these pages call "spiritual growth"? Nobody can be sure; but the changes are more likely to work in this nobler direction when young and old together are better aware of the nature of the task and labor to rise to it.

If, therefore, any one thought especially characterizes these chapters, it is a view of ethical growth that forbids compartmenting or regarding morals as a kind of annex to a life, added as a wing might be to a building. To say, "Let us develop health first, then mentality, then good use of leisure, then citizenship, then character," or even to develop all these at the same time, is to run the danger (only too real in many quarters) of concentrating on the parts and forgetting the whole, especially forgetting that charac-

## P R E F A C E

ter in the better sense operates in and through every one of the otherwise separate interests.

The book is addressed, it need hardly be said, to parents and public-minded citizens quite as much as to teachers. A high compliment, no doubt, is paid to schools and colleges when the public expects them to shoulder the main burden in the making of lives. But these institutions can go little further than the community is willing to let them go. The vexed problem of academic freedom is one illustration. Another is the contrast between the civic ethics taught in the classroom and the deplorable civic practices tolerated in too many communities outside. Upon all these problems, America greatly needs fresh air and light. Education will move ahead faster when the best thinking and practice outside the classroom come to the support of those within.

That each of the problems which a comprehensive program thus suggests would require at least a single huge volume to itself, the writer is painfully aware. He has tried to keep in clear outline the total picture of the more admirable type of life required to-day and the interrelation of the many forces needed to create such living. No single set of devices will ever avail for meeting the real problem. The mental hygienists, for example, have much to tell us; but so have the sociologists and the philosophers. The social reformers are strong on the need for social reconstruction; but the foundation of any lasting structure is high-grade personality. No one formula will do. It is enough for the purposes of this book if the reader is made more aware of the wide scope of the problem and is encouraged to study further in the lists added at the end for each chapter.

Although the book is not an official publication, many of its illustrations are drawn from the Ethical Culture School in New York, long known as a pioneer in progressive education. Others are taken from the younger Ethical

## P R E F A C E

Culture School in Brooklyn. But at least as many are drawn from public schools all over the country. Indeed it is a gratifying sign of progress that practices begun in private experimental schools are now increasingly employed in the public system, a growth all the more encouraging in view of the handicaps under which many a public school system must still do its work. To the students in his classes in several state universities who offered these illustrations, the author herewith voices his thanks.

Special gratitude must also be expressed to Augusta Alpert, Saul Bernstein, George S. Counts, Edith O. Cuthbert, Anna Gillingham, Benjamin C. Gruenberg, Margaret Alltucker Norton, Julie W. Neumann, Paula Neumann, George A. Rice, for contributions to the manuscript and criticisms. It is understood that these friends are not committed to the views here expressed. The author thanks too the editors of *Religious Education, School and Home, The English Journal, The Survey, The Woman's Journal* for permission to reprint paragraphs or articles published by them. Grateful acknowledgment for paragraphs quoted from other authors is accorded in due place.

The book is in no sense a rewriting of the author's *Education for Moral Growth*. Many topics here omitted or treated briefly, received a fuller exposition there; some have been expanded in the present volume; others like the chapters, Testing Results, Community Spirit, Mental Hygiene, Individual Differences, Home-Making and Sex, cover new ground.

H. N.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
CHAPTER	
I. WHY EDUCATE? . . . . .	I

### PART I

#### WHAT HOME AND COMMUNITY CAN DO

II. BETTER HOMES . . . . .	19
III. HOMEMAKING AND SEX . . . . .	39
IV. COMMUNITY HELP . . . . .	58
V. WORK IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE . . . . .	81
VI. SOCIAL SPIRIT . . . . .	105
VII. RELIGION . . . . .	119

### PART II

#### WHERE PSYCHOLOGY CAN HELP

VIII. MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES . . . . .	139
IX. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES . . . . .	164
X. MAKING NATURE AN ALLY . . . . .	181

### PART III

#### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

XI. LEARNING BY DOING . . . . .	203
XII. DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION . . . . .	228

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII. LITERATURE AND ART . . . . .	247
XIV. THE SOCIAL STUDIES . . . . .	268
XV. THE NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS . . . . .	291

## PART IV

### CONCLUSION

XVI. MEASURING RESULTS . . . . .	317
XVII. OUR SECOND CHANCE . . . . .	337
READING LIST . . . . .	353
INDEX . . . . .	367

# LIVES IN THE MAKING



# LIVES IN THE MAKING

## CHAPTER I

### WHY EDUCATE?

We all are blind until we see  
That in the human plan,  
Nothing is worth the making  
If it does not make the man.

Why build these cities glorious  
If man unbuilded goes?  
In vain we build the world unless  
The builder also grows.

EDWIN H. MARKHAM

TWO years ago, when a steamship on its way to South America went down with a loss of some two hundred lives, a newspaper editorial spoke of the disaster as "a shock to our faith in modern security." Undoubtedly a traveler to-day does feel safe in knowing that his ship is built of steel, with powerful engines, water-tight compartments, radio, everything else of that sort. But these essentials are only mechanisms. Like all mere things, they require men to make them and to run them. Men of what kind?

In this respect, the incident was highly illustrative of our age and its needs. Equipped though this vessel was with every modern device, investigation showed that various persons charged with inspection and with enforcing the regulations had been lax. Others had been guilty of bad judgment. Fortunately there were also still others. There were passengers who kept their heads

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

and did their best to get all off safe. Among the crew, a colored man, Lionel Licorice, at considerable risk to himself, managed to pick up sixteen persons and row them to safety. In olden days ships had no radios to send out word of distress. To-day they have, but the radio offers the best of such service when it is operated by men like Michael O'Loughlin.

Through the long hours of Monday he sat at a crazy angle tapping out messages on the key, while the floor of the wireless room tilted upward always until it became a wall and the wall became a floor. Bracing himself to keep from being thrown down the sloping deck, he sat for hours sending out test signals so that approaching vessels and shore stations could determine the exact position of the foundering liner.

In the persons who had anything to do with that trip—owners, builders, officers, crew, passengers—the human race as a whole is symbolized. All mankind is on a voyage whose outcome for better or for worse rests with men, women, children, of mingled defects and gifts. How to multiply the excellences, raise their quality, and increase their effectiveness is the most vital question that people can ask.

Here we turn, as always, to our young. It is customary at this point to enlarge upon the seriousness of to-day's juvenile delinquency. This matter will be treated in these pages, but only as one phase of a problem much more comprehensive. Not all our youth by any means are speeding to destruction. And even if those on their way to moral ruin could, by some sudden magic, be diverted, we should still have to ask the question fundamental not only for them but for all the others too: "Where then should their lives be headed?" Granted that the steamship is to be secure against sink-

## WHY EDUCATE?

ing: what next? Lives are to be saved *from* evil but *for* what good?

A moving sense of where the human race as a whole is to steer its course would put new life into all our many endeavors at betterment. Thus, it is a pity that in many a community immense effort must at this late date go into fighting political corruption and getting mere elementary efficiency in public office. Would this be needed, or would there still be occasion to speak of strikes, unemployment, slums, if enough people were caught by the vision of the high-grade persons whom democracy at its best is expected to breed? People who saw their cities as the homes where better men were to be developed, "and then nobler men, and after that, men still nobler," would have a truer perspective over to-day's needs, and a powerful motive to supply them.

Serious, therefore, as the problem of our delinquents is, we shall handle our wrongdoers more wisely when we are better convinced what to make of our normal, and no less, of our superior types. Even those who are not classed as "problem cases" are far from being such persons as our world needs most.

To what positive good—immensely different from just abstaining from crime—do we want all our many types to shape their lives? What can all of us do together to release on constantly higher planes the most admirable of human gifts? Throughout the ages wise men have dreamt of an earth wherein the best and highest in man's life would rule. Imagine how our civilization would be transformed if this object were sought with even half the zeal and intelligence we put into pursuing wealth, power, honors. Splendid projects for a juster, nobler world call on all men and women to do their full share.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Are we eager to see our children counted among those who respond gladly?

This affirmative object is the concern of these chapters. The ethical life for home, school, and community to promote, much more than a matter of checking evil, is a life that is animated by a grand outlook over human destiny as a whole. It beholds in the faces of children certain exalted promises, the fulfilling of which is worth all it costs. It desires these boys and girls to bear witness in the greatest of ways to the powers for excellence in the human spirit. It wants every love that can enter their lives—the love of beauty, of science, of happy working together—to introduce them to a love still nobler, the love of that something finest in all men which is yet to remold our world on ever statelier patterns.

If the efforts we call education have one most urgent need, it is an elevated way of looking at all these possibilities. Moral education, far from being chiefly the preventing of transgression, should aid young and old to serve the highest with a loyalty, a power, and an understanding that will grow with the years. Lives are made by what they omit, but most of all by what they include.

### NOT BAD, BUT NOT THE BEST

In this respect, then, people may be grouped roughly into three classes. There are those who somehow get a good time from destroying the creations of other persons' labors, like those to whom a white wall or a statue speaks only an invitation to smudge things up.

Then there are those who do not destroy, but who enjoy without adding anything. They look upon themselves with satisfaction because they say, "What harm

## WHY EDUCATE?

am I doing? I am not hurting anybody." Assuredly—they do better in that at least they do not despoil. But to rest satisfied with themselves for not being destroyers or wasters is as if a man should say, "I am a good citizen because I have never robbed, a good husband because I never tried to poison my wife." There are many who keep their self-esteem by contrasting themselves with those who do wrong.

This second group is perhaps the largest, whose chief temptation is not delinquency but mediocrity. We are familiar enough with the fact that many persons are mediocre intellectually, "the great army of the mentally unemployed." They can read; but what do they read? There can be ethical mediocrity, too. People can be free from wickedness, but spiritually asleep. They can give their chief energies to comparative trifles. Like the cat in the Mother Goose rhyme, they have the chance to visit London and see the queen, but they come back with no more achieved than frightening a mouse.

For example, few thoughtful persons will deny how enormously the importance of money-making is exaggerated. In many communities, this is one of the chief ambitions held out to the young. It is the commonest, and sometimes the main obstacle that school and home encounter when they try to instil sounder ideals of successful living.

The writer once spent a railroad journey in conversation with an influential business man. The talk turned on schools. The man had gone to a "select" school in his boyhood, but apparently it had supplied his life with very little enduring inspiration. Although he had "taken" French, literature, science, history, there was none of them he had continued to pursue. "Do you

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

remember any of your teachers; and were there any who counted for much in your life?" Apparently there were none. After a minute or two he did recall one who had helped him. "I've forgotten his name," he said; "but he was a good teacher. He taught me how to write a swell business letter." More men and women than we can count have a conception of education as meager as this.

What is the harm? These types are not necessarily selfish or in the least wicked. Many are quite charitable. They pride themselves on being successful, and especially on being energetic. But they typify our great need to put the energy so characteristic of America into purposes infinitely better than those dreamt of by the ordinary home and the ordinary school.

These men are plentiful in school boards.<sup>1</sup> Ask them what they think our schools should do for the children; and most of them will be found quite willing to let our schools become a kind of educational factory to turn out better hands and clerks for the shops and stores and offices. Tell them that good as it is for people to be trained properly for their jobs, they nevertheless need something more; say that every boy and girl is entitled to participate in the world's heritage of culture, to become the better person through creatively loving and promoting the noblest achievements of the human spirit,

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<sup>1</sup> "In those parts of the country which have come under the particular sway of the machine culture, the entire educational system and the accompanying educational theory have been greatly influenced by the ideals of business enterprise" (p. 138). "The successful business man is the arbiter of educational enterprise in the United States today" (p. 156). "One of the most natural results of the rule of the practical man is the relatively low esteem in which disinterested intellectual achievement is held in America."—George S. Counts, *The American Road to Culture* (The John Day Co.), p. 159.

## WHY EDUCATE?

and most of them will simply stare. John Stuart Mill spoke of education as "bridging a gulf between men as they are and men as they might become." But many of these prosperous gentlemen have no active desire that our youth acquire the culture that will further this purpose.

The papers tell us that a notorious gangster has at last been jailed. We rejoice that for a while one of this tribe will now be kept out of mischief. Soon, however, we find ourselves pitying him. It is not the sentimental pity that would set a criminal entirely free to commit further crime, but the reflection that in him the light and the hope of an ascending humanity have been quenched. The contrast between what all human life might be and what it is in such people as these is saddening enough. But other persons disappoint in this way, too. Although they are guiltless of crime or other wickedness, the use they make of the gift of education is hardly impressive.

### HIGH-CLASS PEOPLE

A third group consists of those who are unwilling to be just the receivers. They know that the best things in life come because somebody or other has worked for them, and they can keep their self-respect only by contributing their own share to the onward march of mankind.

Shall we specify the better types? No one life can ever be completely a model for others. Gifts, opportunities, handicaps, vary in all of us. No two are quite the same. But glimpses into certain expressions of the forward-pointing spirit we can find in life after life when we look for them.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Not all folk make a god of money. For instance, there is the teaching profession, only one of many callings where success can never be rated by the dollar standard. There is simply no way to equate the two. To how much would we say a teacher is entitled for arousing ambition in an indolent boy, or for turning a young gangster straight? While Napoleon was steeping Europe in blood, a Swiss farmer named Pestalozzi was trying to demonstrate how the social problem over which the radicals of his day were concerned was fundamentally a matter of education. He gathered the riffraff of his neighborhood to his farm and offered these children not only the first schooling they had ever received, but a schooling on new lines. His whole life was spent in trying to show how any hope of a better world required this new kind of education for the common people. "Even while I was the sport of men who condemned me," he wrote later, "I never lost sight of the object I had in view, which was the removal of the causes of the misery I saw on all sides of me." Although more than one attempt failed, and although the principles on which he worked have been superseded, he did improve the teaching in Europe and (through Horace Mann) in America. "He lived as a beggar among beggars in order that beggars might live like men."

There are few among us who are not touched by a sense of something nobly superior in such a life as this. One can live at the expense of other lives as animals (human and other kinds) do. One can also live in promoting life. In the presence of such creative personalities we feel like lifting our caps, and saying "We salute you."

Such better types are found everywhere, not only

## WHY EDUCATE?

among the illustrious or among the doers of the striking benefactions. In city after city, where children are as badly off as those to whom Pestalozzi ministered, there are teachers as ready as he to give of their best. Underpaid, often overworked, many such can be found giving time long after school hours to backward or erring pupils. Nobody can estimate how many young lives build up a needed self-confidence, or turn to serious aspirations, because some trusting teacher takes a "human" interest in them.

Other such persons can be met in homes, shops, offices, people glad for whatever strength is in them and willing to put it to every good use, people whose conduct reanimates the faith of their fellows in the goodness of life. In a certain slum neighborhood, a group of lads who had belonged to a settlement club for many years were especially proud of one of their members. He had won a scholarship at a technical college, where he earned his keep by doing the usual odd jobs. The boy's father died, and Jacob decided to come home and give all his time to help support his family. When his clubmates heard this, they agreed that it was better for him to stay on at the college for the remaining year and a half, and that they would raise the money that otherwise he might give his family for that period. Their homes were as poor as his, but with the help of contributions, sales, and the like, they managed to offer one of their number this needed start toward his career.

In the same neighborhood dwelt many people the quality of whose lives could hardly be predicted from the ugliness of their surroundings. There comes to the writer's mind, among other instances, a family where the father was a drunkard, but two of the children were

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

unusually fine. They were especially concerned that a younger brother and a younger sister, already inclined to wildness, be kept straight. Time that they might have given to recreation with people of their own age and tastes, they spent with these younger charges. In another home, the son was convinced that his father's business was disreputable, and he worked day and night to make up the difference in income when he finally got his father to change his occupation. Social workers and teachers can cite numerous examples from the tenements where parents, husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters, live on the high levels. Some are consciously offering strong hands that keep others from slipping morally. Others, without being aware of the fact, are inspirations because of their unselfishness and unconquerable genuineness. In all walks of life there are persons whose behaviors put the petty desires and self-centered discontents to shame.

Such lives are creative. They promote the greatest work that the community of mankind can achieve. Into their contacts with others, they infuse a quality that raises the level of all life together.

As one lamp lights another nor growtheth less,  
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

The need to live thus effectively no thoughtful person can escape; for much as one may desire just to live and let live, he cannot help touching the lives of other persons. In some fashion or other, all of us are constantly affecting our fellow beings, both by what we do and by what we leave undone. With no choice in this matter, we can choose only what kinds of effect we will try to produce. The best effects are those whereby all con-

## WHY EDUCATE?

cerned are quickened to fresh awareness of the heights that the human race could attain if man were fully and perfectly himself.

### WHAT THE TOOLS ARE FOR

What, then, keeps home, school, community from making some such aims as these the living impulse in their work together? Perhaps we are so absorbed in providing the tools of life that we forget the ends that these should serve. A foreign observer, much impressed with the boundless energy he beheld in our country, was equally struck, he said, with the fact that especially in the colleges very few young men and women seemed at all interested in asking where all this energy was to go. Flattered when he spoke of our hustle, people were indifferent or puzzled, almost annoyed, when he put the question, "What is the best use you can make of all this power?" The vast majority of students, it was his opinion, were "so busy getting ready to produce and to acquire that they had no time to look into the purposes and the results of all the producing and the acquiring."

The matter is far from being purely theoretic. It is good that science, for example, is being studied more than ever, and that our technical schools are multiplying. But no slight hurt has come from forgetting that science can give us only tools, marvelously effective, but still no more than tools, and that people can be so entranced by the "efficiency" of the instruments (poison bombs, for instance), that they never ask themselves whether these should ever be used at all. Science lends itself as readily to harm as to good. Its gifts are like money that we can spend indifferently on trash or on better objects. The next war may see disease germs propa-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

gated for use against whole cities as they were indeed used against cattle in the World War. The latest findings in chemistry are as available to the burglar when he cracks a safe as they are to the surgeon in the hospital. The physician saves time by using a taxicab; so does the murderer. The printing press, the typewriter, and the radio have enormously increased the speed of communication and the size of the audiences that men are able to reach. They have not of themselves made the communications more deserving of attention.

The making of the tools, to repeat, is indeed essential. It is right that the physician should have all knowledge at his command, even such knowledge as others may misuse. Even if it could be done, no one would want people to be treated like children who must be kept from razors and other useful things for fear of possible hurt. But it is the outstanding moral challenge of this age of science and machinery that thus far our power to make the tools has greatly outrun our power to put them to the highest uses. The slums that still disgrace modern communities are as much a product of the Industrial Revolution as our hygienic plumbing is. Poison gas and the submarine are as typical of the age as antiseptic surgery. Now that men can do so much more good and so much more damage than before, it behooves them to think more earnestly and more wisely than ever upon questions of what is good, what is better, and what is best. If our educational institutions neglect this task, and fail to supply the necessary ideals and practices, where shall we turn? The churches reach fewer numbers. The newspapers and the movies reach more, but not many of us would care to say that as moral agencies,

## WHY EDUCATE?

in their present stage of development, these command confidence.

Instruments for making a better world we possess in abundance. The task of home and school is to provide ever better ones. And even more important is it to teach the wisest use of these tools, to keep before young minds ideals, visions, goals, directions.

### SO-CALLED VIRTUES ARE ALSO TOOLS

If this applies to the mere things that modern machines produce so lavishly, it is no less true of many of the "virtues" that schools are exhorted to cultivate. These likewise are only tools, and often nothing more. Physical vigor, for instance, is an instrument that can be as sadly misused or wasted in triviality as other gifts. A healthy burglar is more dangerous than a sick one. Likewise a brainy swindler is better equipped for his kind of success than a stupid one. Who has more need of a cool head than the gambler? The school in which old Fagin taught Oliver Twist and the Artful Dodger gave the boys a vocational training in which certain highly commendable traits were required, traits listed in many a moral education syllabus. To be good pickpockets they had to obey orders, use their wits, be diligent, industrious, persevering, careful, silent, coöperative, and loyal. The training called for more skill and self-control than poor Oliver could muster. Banditry also requires courage, and the imagination and will power that can postpone immediate satisfactions for remote ends. A certain suggestibility test tries to measure the moral attainments of the pupil by finding how firmly he sticks to a point when he knows he is right. But the firmness can also be shown when he is wrong,

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

and also when he knows that he is bluffing. Plainly it is no trifling or academic matter to be concerned over what the aims of education should be, when even our so-called virtues are only instruments, capable of a wide variety of use.

This instrumental character of many of the things called good, the pressure of the day's work constantly tempts us to forget. It is as if a company of men were to ascend a steep mountain. They must be equipped with the right sort of clothing; they must have their mountain staves, their blankets, their knapsacks, and their food. These are what our skills and modern improvements are like. They give the better chance to climb the mountain. But what should we say of those who possess all the equipment, but nevertheless, instead of ascending, remain at the base or wander about aimlessly?

Advance on the part of even the few is a benefit. If the greatness latent in the nature of man comes to blossom even in some, there is gain, undoubtedly. But it is far from enough. All of mankind needs to grow morally. If the race as a whole is to progress, we must not flatter ourselves that we are moving ahead so fast, when huge masses are content to make of themselves so little. The advance of the few makes only more conspicuous the failure of all the others, and it points the way for them.

Man is not man as yet;  
Nor shall I deem his end attained  
While only here and there a star  
dispels the darkness.

A true progress for society *en masse* requires that the individuals of whom it is composed take a conscious and

## WHY EDUCATE?

self-directing part in the process. All men must do that justice to themselves which some souls do so much better than others. The more creditable achievements are hints or foregleams of what, on still higher planes, should be universal.

The fruits of education will be finer when the object of first concern is this root quality of man's life, a change for the better at the core of that life, not simply in the external benefits that are added, or the outward obstacles removed. Let us, for instance, have better health, better housing, of course. It is good that modern science has made it possible for people to do their work in life without the needless hindrance of backward homes. But man is to be something more than a healthy cow or a eugenic horse. Great souls have lived in hovels; and palaces equipped with all the most modern of hygienic improvements can shelter souls that are mean. The inner transformation is the important thing. What types of excellent men and women are to inhabit the model houses? What kinds of children are to go from these houses to the schools and the colleges and then to homes of their own? We say they are to be better than their parents. In what ways? All the improvements in science, in eugenic breeding, all the beauty, all the external reforms of whatever kind, get their best meaning when they make people more conscious of the endless riches to be developed in human souls and fortify faith in this, our most important wealth.

Here then is where we find an aim more thorough-going than saving our young from delinquency. There is placed at our disposal a spiritual heritage wrought of the best achievements of wise and true-hearted people

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

through the ages. That fund we can, if we will, fail to use. Picture what our planet would be like if we permitted the next generation to grow up unable to read a word, untaught a single poem or song, untutored in any skill of hand or brain, and worst of all, uninspired with any sense of the loftiest uses these gifts should serve. We and our successors can waste the great heritage like shameless prodigals. Or we can draw upon it without adding any worthy offerings of our own. But there is conduct vastly better, the creative type of living that this book has in mind when it speaks of education for character.

In each instance the conduct of the day's history is doing something to the destroyers, the wasters, the mere consumers, the creators, making them such manner of persons as they are, hindering or promoting in themselves and in others the flowering of that finer humanity which is yet to brighten all our world. A progress in which this best shall receive in all men full honor, is the aim that gives the business of home, school, community its most priceless opportunity.

PART I  
WHAT HOME AND COMMUNITY CAN DO



## CHAPTER II

### BETTER HOMES

I bring you again in the  
faith of youth, and  
its zest

\* \* \*

A new urge of being, like  
the rise of sap in  
the trees in the spring,

A new bursting forth, like  
quickened leaves and  
buoyant branches.

MURIEL STRODE

**E**DUCATION suggests the school. But school is only one agency among many. By the time a child enters the pre-primary class, his character has already been turned in certain directions by his home. And at its best, his school is only a part-time institution. Although he attends school for eight years, he is there for only a fraction of the day for nine or ten months, or a total period of only one year. What is happening to him in the remaining seven years to thwart or to encourage the ablest efforts of his teachers?

Some children are more fortunate in their parents than others. Thomas Carlyle, who preached veracity with the passion of an ancient prophet, was able to say this of one influence in his home:

The force that had been lent my father he honorably expended in manful well-doing. Nothing that he undertook to do but he did it faithfully and like a true man. I shall look on the houses he built with a certain proud interest. They stand firm

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

and sound to the heart all over his little district. No one that comes after him will ever say "Here was the finger of a hollow eye-servant. . . ." Let me write my books as he built his houses.

### PROBLEM HOMES

Bad homes there are in abundance. A junior high school class in a famous industrial city was asked to write a composition on the five-day week. One boy wrote: "I wish my Dad had to work every day even Sunday. Because he just sets around the house, and he don't know what to do with himself, and he gets crosser and crosser and either licks us kids or goes over to Charlie's [a bootleg resort in the neighborhood] and tanks up."

Adult education is still in its infancy. The work to be done here is vast. "Although we talk a lot about little problem children, the thing that uses up all of our time and our patience and our energy is the big problem parent." A well-known social worker lists "Nineteen Ways of Being a Bad Parent." Some may think the number too small. In a single high school in a metropolis in the Middle West, the assistant principal handling the problem cases found as contributory agencies to the trouble the following long list of conditions in the homes<sup>1</sup>:

A. Poverty, resulting in

- (1) Lack not only of sufficient clothing and food, proper shelter and other opportunities, but also of coveted personal possessions and the good times necessary for moral growth.
- (2) Crowding, lodgers, lack of privacy.

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<sup>1</sup> Edith O. Cuthbert, *The Maladjusted High School Girl—A Study in Guidance*, Master of Arts thesis, Ohio State University, 1926.

## BETTER HOMES

- (3) Lack of culture, giving the girl a feeling of social inadequacy.
  - (4) Dirty, uncongenial surroundings, worse than poverty itself, driving the girl to the excitement of low-grade dance halls.
  - (5) Inferiority complexes, evidenced by loss of self-respect and self-confidence, overcompensated for by an attitude of aggressiveness and selfishness.
- B. Wealth, resulting in
- (1) Too much spending money.
  - (2) A feeling of snobbishness.
  - (3) Scorn for teachers, as of lower social standing.
- C. The problem of the youngest or eldest child.
- D. The unwanted child—at adolescence may seek transitory happiness in numerous chance love affairs.
- E. Faulty home training.
- (1) Too much discipline, destroying self-confidence and encouraging deceit.
  - (2) Lack of discipline, encouraging temperamental conduct.
  - (3) Lack of concrete moral training, such as development of good sportsmanship.
  - (4) Too little attention, resulting in a feeling of lack of affection, highly important in character development.
  - (5) Extreme sympathy, or unwise flattery, giving the girl an exaggerated idea of her importance, and hindering the development of power of adaptation.
  - (6) Wrong attitude toward sex, making the subject taboo, thus losing the girl's confidence and inviting the development of sex complexes.
  - (7) Selfishness in caring less for the independent and healthy development of the child than for conformity to the standards making for parents' own comfort.
  - (8) Mental defect in parents.
  - (9) Ignorance, responsible for unwise preferences, prejudices, superstitions, emotional misvaluations, and misdirected ideals of their imitative daughters.
  - (10) Foreign birth; never learning English, making for the girl a home in a segregated district, and responsible for a conflict between American culture in the school and old-world standards of living at home.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

- (11) Strangeness in a strange land; failing to foresee the dangers threatening the girl, and therefore unable to train her to resist temptation.
- (12) Misdirected ambition. The father, conscious of his own limitations, and despising industrial education, insists that the girl go through academic school, irrespective of her mentality. Parents, too ambitious for high grades, who drive a dull but sensitive girl to truancy.
- (13) Nervousness or sickness, accounting for the nervous girl who is sympathetic and prone to imitation.

### F. Lack of parental care, through

- (1) Homelessness of girl.
- (2) Death of father, and working of mother.
- (3) Unsympathetic step-parent.

### G. Degraded or brutalizing homes. Where there is hatred and mutual suspicion, the girl may adopt antisocial means of making a place for herself in the community.

### H. After-school employment for long hours as a result of need or greed of parents.

### I. Unnecessary family thrift.

## WHAT HOMES ARE FOR

Abundant as the bad homes are, they are not the most numerous; and fortunately, even in homes with a poor rating, far more often than not there is a love between parents and children that is highly essential to the re-making of any home. Even where a child has to be removed from his parents, what is the best possible substitute for his own home? Not an institution, but another home as nearly as possible what his own home should have been. In the main, it is best to put the child with foster parents, for these are better able than any superintendents and assistants to take the place of his own deficient father and mother.

From the standpoint of economy, separate homes represent a huge waste. Life in a barracks would be

## BETTER HOMES

much cheaper. Add up the cost of the cooking utensils for all the families in a single city apartment house, and it amounts to much more than the equipment of a single kitchen for all the families together would cost. Count likewise the hours of labor spent by each mother and servant in all the apartments. The total far outruns the labor of a few highly trained persons to conduct one restaurant for all the families. But tempting as such economies look, we reject them. The privacy and the individualizing influences of a separate home are too important.

Indispensable to any strong character is the assurance of being not merely one in a multitude but one who counts in and of himself. For this, there is nothing like the privacy centering around life in a home, "our" home. From the right kind of home, a child gets a certain sense of security, a feeling of something sure, to which he can tie up, and he gets it chiefly from feeling himself loved. Nobody wants to feel himself unwanted. We all need to be prized, whether or not we thoroughly deserve to be. In Robert Frost's poem where the dying hired man seeks his brother's home, the following colloquy occurs:

Home is the place where when you have to go there,  
They have to take you in.

I should have called it  
Something you somehow haven't to deserve.

As a great teacher put it:<sup>1</sup>

. . . The foundation of the spiritual relation is that attitude towards other human beings which consists in seeing them, not as they are, but as they possibly may be. And it is the natural instinct of the mother's heart and soul to see the child in this

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<sup>1</sup> Felix Adler in *The Standard* for May, 1924, p. 294.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

way—to see its possibilities, yes, and always, on account of its possibilities, to hold it dear in advance of any actual claim that it may have to be esteemed worth while, even despite such acts on its part as would seem to outsiders to prove its worthlessness. The mother's soul believes in the child. And the fact that some one believes in any of us, thinks better of us than we have any right to think of ourselves, is in a way our anchorage in life. The world is full of alien faces, of people who are full of their own affairs and indifferent to ours. The world is an alien world in which we should not be at home if there were not some hearts that gave their warmth to ours. At the outset of life it is the parents', especially the mother's, care and kindness that gives us this incomparable boon.

This of course does not exclude the father. It is a double advantage to have the affection of both parents.

But love needs to be enlightened. Indispensable as affection is, it must be taught how to spend itself most wisely. "The first need in training a child is to have more sense than the child." In the years ahead we are going to see an increased, more intelligent, education for parenthood, for men no less than for women, both before their children are born and after, long continued. Of all the phases in the adult education movement of to-day, few are more promising than this of parents learning to be better parents. And none are more important.

## HOMES ARE CHANGING

For this there are many reasons to-day. All life is changing. It would be folly to expect the life of the home to stand still. How can we turn mere change into progress, or change for the better?

One outstanding fact about the home to-day is its democracy. There was a time, for example, when father was the sole and unquestioned head of the family. His

## BETTER HOMES

word was law. To-day his authority, to phrase the matter mildly, is shared by that of the wife, and for the children themselves there is far wider freedom than there has ever seemed to be.

Once upon a time it was the parents who decided whom the children were to marry. The father decided the child's occupation. Even fifty years ago, if educational opportunities for women had been as plentiful as now, far fewer girls would have dreamt of announcing to their parents, "I am going away from home to college." Modern democracy, in a word, has worked its way from the political life into the home. Wife and child both now have a share in fundamental decisions that once were made exclusively by the father.

Here is a salient change, and the mention of the word democracy reminds us again how necessary it is to distinguish between mere change and change for the better. All in all, it is an advantage that the despotism of the father, howsoever benevolent it must have been in many a home, has gone. But surely no one would say that the gain has been unmixed. If, for instance, the family decided whom the children were to marry, the mistakes of the parents were certainly not worse than the mistakes of the children in choosing for themselves. A benevolent father may choose the wrong bride for his son. But the son himself may choose badly. Although freedom is surely better than despotism, the merest glance at our democracy as we see it in to-day's political and home life is enough to tell us that the fruits of freedom are of many kinds, some better than others.

Therefore the problem becomes how to reap the better fruits of the democratic home life. Here there is a part that parents can still play in the lives of their children.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Most boys and girls want parents who are comrades with them. In that freer relationship there are excellent opportunities for a relation as beautiful, as enriching, as ennobling as ever was the stricter attitude of the past.

In the first place, the children will be trained even earlier than before to be their own masters. Parents say Amen to this suggestion because they think, "Yes, it is good for a child to govern himself"—meaning not to eat too much candy, or not to cry, or fight, or strike his little sister. But there is a price to pay that the parents are not always willing to suffer. If the child is to be genuinely self-governing, you cannot mother him as much as you want. You may be making him too dependent, unfitting him to stand up by himself, as sooner or later he must. If he thinks for himself, there will be many times when he will not think as you do. But he must not be regarded as a lost soul merely because he follows his own will instead of yours. The will with which he opposes you is the very will that he must use later to oppose temptations. In the progressive school of to-day, private or public, children are not treated as criminals if they disagree with their teachers and are bold enough to stand by their own convictions. On the contrary, they are encouraged, because this is one of the prime requirements of democratic self-direction. It is needed no less in the home.

In the second place, the democratic family will not demand that the child become a duplicate of his parents. The father of Michelangelo was a lawyer, and had set his heart upon his son's following the same career. But the boy had no such leaning. There were times when the father was so infuriated at seeing the boy spend his time drawing sketches on paper that he beat him.

## BETTER HOMES

Charles Darwin's father was a physician and wanted his son to be one too. Failing to force him to become a doctor, he tried to make him a clergyman. "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching," the father declared; "and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family."

But even if parents are not so despotic to-day, they may nevertheless wrong the child in other ways. A parent who has his own musical gifts may force a child to spend weary and useless hours practicing music when the child has no real heart for it. For a child to be unlike his parents is no disgrace. Or sometimes a parent may fail to see that it is no stain upon the family escutcheon if a child does not show the intellectual aptitudes for which the parents are keen. A teacher who for many years had been nursing a disappointment at not being advanced, compensated himself for his failure by exaggerated hopes for his child. The child was not particularly brilliant. But the father was so sure that the child was high above the average that he forced it at a pace which bred trouble. For many parents it is very hard to realize that children have their own lives to shape. Why must they be woven on the one pattern that the parent demands?

Excellence has many shapes. If it takes a different shape from that of the parents' gifts, the wise parent will not lament. On the contrary, if the difference is at all promising, he will rejoice. "I do not wish to bring men to me," said Emerson, "but to themselves. . . . I should count it a measure of the impurity of insight, if it did not create independence."

In the third place, the democratic family does more than respect unlikeness. The good that it wants must

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

come by persuasion, not by force. Sooner or later all parents will wake up to the fact that there is no longer any divine right of parents to autocratic authority. More than ever the bond uniting children to their fathers and mothers must be a voluntary bond. To weave and to strengthen such voluntary ties, there is no better way than to build up the child's confidence.

To-day the special point of conflict between young and old happens to be over the freedom of the sexes. Parents are alarmed or confused. They see the old barriers and safeguards removed. They hear and they see instances of grave transgression. They know that they can no longer threaten the young. Modern science has removed the fear of sex diseases and the fear of childbirth. In many a home the children have the parents badly frightened.

Some parents reassure themselves by listening to those who flatter the young: "They are sweeter and lovelier and more honorable and everything else than ever before." This kind of indiscriminate generalization gets us nowhere, any more than the equally unfounded statement that the younger generation is going to the dogs. The fact would seem to be that there is a great deal more freedom in the world than there has ever been, and freedom is something that gives the foolish more chance to make themselves more foolish, and the sensible more chance to make themselves better. Young people are neither worse nor better than they were. They simply have a richer opportunity to make themselves one or the other.

## BETTER HOMES

### DO NOT DRIVE, BUT LEAD

Now, since the parent cannot drive his children to use that gift of freedom wisely, he must persuade. It is therefore still necessary for children to have a certain confidence and trust in their parents. "There are some things," a wit remarked, "that even the youngest of us do not understand." There are situations where the difference between right and wrong, poor and better, cannot be brought home by argumentation. The choice of the finer way is at bottom a matter of feeling. How, for instance, can anybody really convince a selfish person by argument that unselfishness is better? One can give dozens of reasons and make out a case for unselfishness which is proof against any of the assaults of ordinary logic. Yet the selfish person is quite untouched. If he does not, so to speak, feel in his heart the shabbiness of being a hog, the best arguments of reason will never convince him. How can we explain to a person who is tone-deaf the joy we feel in hearing great music?

What saves people from sex transgression is a certain deep sense of respect for personality.<sup>1</sup> Every fine-grained nature is aware of something about people too precious to be profaned by the squandering of life's intimacies. It is difficult for many of us, and perhaps impossible for most, to put the thought into the form of convincing argument. It is a matter of first principle to be felt as fundamental, just as there is no argument that courage is better than cowardice, or that loyalty for any one of us individually is better than treachery.

Such first principles a parent cannot teach his child

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<sup>1</sup> For further treatment of this topic see the next chapter. See also the author's *Modern Youth and Marriage* (D. Appleton & Co.)

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

in the same cold-blooded way he can show him how to "prove" the answer to a multiplication example. Our feeling for the great life truths is something that we catch from others, and chiefly from those whom we love and respect. If most of us adults were called upon to give arguments for belief in the ultimate merit of truth as against lying, we should be hard put to it. We should probably find that our faith in the validity of any moral principle is largely the result of our faith in people whose lives illustrate the principle. Many a person who would be puzzled to give reasons for supporting social work, is satisfied that it must be good if it appeals to Jane Addams.

Here is where parents to-day have an unusually big job and opportunity. They must win that confidence which inclines the young to trust the judgment of their elders until they are old enough themselves to understand better why those judgments are sound. Take the matter of language. A child of ten cannot really understand as an adult can what an advantage it is to speak with the grace of the cultivated man or woman. Why should speech be grammatical? Why learn to make it more—to make it polished and beautiful? It is much easier to use the words and intonations of the uncouth. Suppose, therefore, we made no attempt to teach better speech until the child was twenty-one, a citizen, and abler to understand why good speech is better. "Excellent idea—especially as it protects the right of every free-born American to go his own way!" But in all those years up to twenty-one, he would be forming the poorer habits and forming them so securely that if ever he did wake up to the need for better speech, he would be badly handicapped by the lost time.

## BETTER HOMES

So about the wise use of all to-day's freedom and respect for the personality in oneself and in other beings. It takes a growing experience with life itself to tell us how fundamental these are. If young people cannot always understand how basic they are, happily, in the better kind of home, they are quite willing to take them on trust because they feel confidence in their parents. They are not surrendering their judgments, or abdicating the will to think for themselves. They are doing what sensible persons do more or less all the time, supplementing their own fallible judgments by trusting the wisdom of those whom they have had good reason to respect.

### WIN CONFIDENCE

Such confidence cannot be forced but must come freely. It is needed from babyhood on for other reasons than guidance on sex. Students of mental hygiene are telling us to-day how greatly any vigorous health for the mind depends on freedom from needless fears, conflicts, depressions, or secret antagonisms. A person may be haunted even in his adult life by a sense of guilt, a secret shame, or a fear arising out of some childhood mistake. These obsessions can poison a life long after their origin has been forgotten. But luckily they can be prevented or banished early when children have bred the habit of coming in confidence to their parents and talking freely about the things that trouble them. Many a fear can be dispelled at once by a wise word from an understanding parent. The habit of coming to the parent is priceless; and, to repeat, it will never be built up by coercion. A child will take advice where he will not be permanently taught by a threat.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

A home training in the wise use of freedom requires, most of all, example. "Train up a child in the way he should go," said Josh Billings, "and walk there yourself once in a while." Children want, as much as any adults, to be reasoned with, not flattered or cajoled, but "shown."

Here are testimonies on the attitudes that win confidence:

What impressed me most about my mother was that she never preached her religion at us, but lived it.

**A teacher writes:**

My father had forbidden me to go to a certain vacant lot to watch older boys play ball. He feared I might be hurt, but I insisted on going. One day when I stayed rather late, he asked me where I had been. I answered that I had been to the corner store where they were demonstrating food and that I had had a sample and liked it very much. He seemed to trust me and said maybe mother would like some too and that he would go back to the store with me and buy some. I was quite worried by this time. We started out, but before reaching the store I confessed that I had told an untruth and that I had been watching the boys play ball.

My father seemed grieved to think that I had lied to him, since he had such faith in me. He didn't punish me, but we talked things over in a very friendly way. I was hurt because I had disappointed him. After that I don't think I ever once deliberately lied to him. Had he whipped or scolded me, it would not have had the same effect, or if he had humiliated me in the presence of my older brothers and sisters.

**Another person said of his own childhood:**

The person who exerted the greatest influence on me was my father. My sisters and I were always allowed to hear the family problems discussed. Through hearing these discussions we learned to appreciate the efforts our parents made for us. We also became aware of the principles that guided their actions and decisions. At least once a week there was a family council at which the affairs of the family were discussed. The wages of

## BETTER HOMES

my father were known and the expenditures reported. If it was possible to grant any luxuries, it was done so by the vote of the family. If they decided that it was impossible, they seemed to do so just as cheerfully. There was little clash as there was real democracy here.

This better relation makes many specific demands. Parents must share their children's lives, be comrades and partners with them just as far as the differences in age, outlook, and temperament will permit. Recreation is one such chance. It can and should be planned as carefully as the children's meals.

The first requisite for recreation in the home is a determination on the part of the parents to start. The second is a spirit of fun and of good sportsmanship and not duty, and the third is—begin! One does not have to study books and plans to make a beginning; nevertheless, we know from experience that the beginning is the hardest part and we know full well the courage and determination it takes to make the start.

The simplest beginning in home recreation is the family play hour—that hour set aside on the same evening each week for parents and children to enjoy family play. The definite time is very important and no mundane affairs should interfere. This hour should be planned ahead of time and children and parents should plan together. The first program can be made from materials familiar and right at hand. Begin with a few good songs sung together, then the reading aloud or the telling of a good story, and then both active and quiet games, alternating. Parents can contribute their share of the game suggestions from games that they played as children which their children probably do not know. Children learn many games at school and on the playground from which their game suggestions can come. You will find that in a very simple way this will make possible a program for your first hour. After this first attempt you will want the help of suggestions from books such as *The Book of Games*, by Forbush and Allen; *Let's Play*, by Edna Geister; and *Games for Playground, Home, School, and Gymnasium*, by Bancroft; and the small booklets on "Home Play" and "Fun for

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Everyone," published by the Playground and Recreation Association of America.<sup>1</sup>

It is astonishing how many opportunities there are. The writer here quoted lists in addition: "The evening meal, provided we can dine instead of merely eating," picnics, excursions to places of historic, artistic interest, and so on, hikes, camping, fishing, music, dramatics, reading aloud, story hour, handicraft, mending, carpentry. "Even household tasks can be (shared) recreation if done in the spirit of play."

A special word needs to be spoken to fathers. They particularly must qualify for their highly important part in shaping the lives of their children by doing more than merely working and earning money for them. They must live with them,—that is, work with them, play with them, read, enjoy, discuss, laugh, think, with them. A home is not a place where the children merely sleep and eat. It is not a dormitory or a filling station. It is not "a place where you get ready to go some place else." It is a home when it is the place where old and young live together in fondness for each other and in a respect which works in both directions. What is the sense in making a success of business, if fathers miss the one big thing that makes the success worth while?

### GROWING UP WITHOUT GROWING AWAY

There is no let-up. The parent of to-day must study his job, and not merely while the children are babies. Why must their growing up mean growing away? In one sense, the child grows away from the mother as

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<sup>1</sup> J. W. Faust in *School Life* (Government Printing Office, February, 1929), p. 102.

## BETTER HOMES

soon as it is born. It no longer draws all its life solely from the mother's body but is shaped by all the other influences that happen to surround it. The other children, the school, the teachers, the books the child reads, the plays it sees, the conversations it hears—all these compete with the parents for the child's allegiance, and hence, in one respect, growing up is a continual growing away. But though this is needed in order that the child may learn how to direct its own life, growing away need not become estrangement. It is a sad day in many a home when a father or mother looks across the table and thinks, "Is that strange young woman over there the little girl who used to come to me in all confidence? Is that silent, rebellious youth the son who once looked up to me?"

Thomas Carlyle's father, a mason, had never gone beyond the elementary school himself, but sent the boy to the university. Later he told his son that the neighbors had counseled him not to do this: "Educate a boy above his parents, and he will look down on them. Thou hast not done so, my son," added the elder Carlyle, "God be thanked for it."

Children must grow away but not grow strangers. Nay, the new tie that must be woven when the child earns his own living and in other ways becomes independent of his parents can be made finer and stronger with the growing years. At first children look up to father and mother with an affection that is uncritical. Then they discover many imperfections. But this need not mean breaking the tie. Beyond the stage of early adolescent disillusion is the stage of new understanding. It is always easy to see defects; it takes a deeper insight to appreciate the good there is even in the most de-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

fective, to learn how to see the unexpressed self in father and mother struggling to assert itself against the special handicaps of age, or temperament, or early training, or other thwarting experiences. All of us are like these parents, trying to utter more than we can ever express. Even in the father whose English is painfully ungrammatical, there is the father spirit wanting for his child the best that life can give. A true growth on the part of the child is one where in spite of the flaws, the child sees and honors that unexpressed, struggling self in the parent soul.

Fortunate the homes where the parents make it easier for their children to keep this bond unbroken. Sometimes it is only when the young themselves become fathers and mothers that they realize how much they need their parents all their lives without end. When they themselves face the need for guiding the young lives entrusted to them, they turn back with a warmer closeness to the ones who they know love them and their children best. They appreciate how there is a wisdom of life that even unlettered parents possess. All that parents and children both can do to keep those bonds of love and understanding strong is none too much.

## UNION IN ETHICAL ADVANCE

Again the point must be stressed that the best moral development is more than a matter of preventing wrong. To many a teacher, home is a place where John and Mary must be punished to make them improve their arithmetic or their manners. Nor is home a mere biologic necessity whereby children are born and then fed, sheltered, clothed. In ethical terms, it is the place where, in the intimacy peculiar to family affection, certain traits

## BETTER HOMES

are bred that all human living together requires for its better remaking.

The father of Cyrus McCormick, the inventor of the reaper, had himself tried to make the invention. He worked for fifteen years with varying success. When the son, taking up where his father had left off, triumphed in 1831 the father said, "It makes me feel proud to have a son do what I could not." That attitude is symbolic. The children are our successors in the doing of the world's work. They are to do it better because of what we pass on to them. In all they do, the matter of supreme concern is the higher grade of personality wrought into the lives of all affected by the work.

When the problem of the home is viewed in this fashion, we see how vital it is that the tie between the generations be kept growing. The school is in an admirable strategic position to interpret the two generations to each other. To the older folk the school can say: "Trust the young. They supply the freshened energy that the world needs to move ahead. Where the old grow weary and would either turn back or stay at rest, the young press on. Even if the old could arrest this desire of youth, they would do so only at the peril of the future still to be achieved. Do not expect their excellence to duplicate yours."

To the young the school can say: "You wish to be understood? Try for your own part to understand the old. Try to convince them that growing up is neither growing away from them nor from good life. If, as a wise mother said some years ago when the styles changed markedly, they still question bobbed hair, prove that common sense can be found under shorn locks, that sleeveless arms are still as good for useful work as for

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

display, that short skirts can well go with first-rate behavior. And especially if you believe in democracy, remember the leading challenge of that ideal: how can people respect the ones who are unlike themselves? How can they work together to bring about those better human relations everywhere that need the very best in young and old both? The chief business of the human race is to get ahead of itself, with the willing coöperation of all its members. Such is the truly democratic way. It may not be as quick as other methods. But because it respects those with whom it differs—even the old who may be seriously mistaken—it comes nearer to meeting the real problem of all our human contacts."

That is, both generations, like other groups not wholly congenial, must try to understand each other, because both are needed to work together at the main task: that the genuinely best in the life of to-day may unite with the best in the past for the building of a future still better.

## CHAPTER III

### HOMEMAKING AND SEX

Happy will that house be in which the relations are formed from character after the highest, and not after the lowest, order.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

HOMES will rise better to their moral opportunities when the makers of the homes are better educated than now. That the future mother must be wiser than ever goes without saying. Because she must understand what modern education is trying to work out with her children, she herself must know something of psychology, and the history and principles of education. Charged with administering the family budget, she must understand economics. All her life is none too long for a continued study, in their immediate as well as in their wider reaches, of the many problems affecting the life of her home.

Her husband likewise needs a special preparation for parenthood. The problems mentioned in the preceding chapter call for the best brains of the fathers too. In the years ahead, "education for fatherhood" may not sound as queer as it does now.

#### SEX INSTRUCTION

It is no longer necessary to urge the need for special education in sex. If any precept is established to-day, it is that innocence is often less protection than sound knowledge, that the silence of its elders does not keep

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

the child from obtaining information—frequently very silly misinformation, that the safeguard against prurience, furtiveness, foolish fears, or hurtful practices is wisely directed enlightenment. Particularly in a world like the present where newspapers, movies, magazines find it profitable to play up the sex impulses, it is more important than ever that all possible help be offered to grow straight and strong.

Certain leading principles for such education stand out. The home should be the place to give it rather than the school. It is needed not only during adolescence but before and after. Before the adult years are reached, it is better that the subject be not taught in a single course. The aim should always be kept positive, not playing upon fears but stressing the worth of the more excellent ways.

For parents to shift the responsibility to the school on the ground that they themselves are unfitted to give such instruction is a mistake. There is much, assuredly, that the school can do to equip the parents of the future, who are now children. All things considered, however, it is the parents who should handle this problem, and, if they are now unfit, they should learn how the thing can be done. A class deals with children in more or less large groups and cannot give the individual teaching especially required here. Children of the same chronological age may be very different in their response to the same kind of teaching about sex. Some are better prepared than others. The parent is more likely to know the child as an individual.

Besides, in spite of to-day's leaning toward publicity, much can still be said for respecting and cultivating the sense of privacy. Some things are quite properly com-

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

mon or public. The more intimate their nature, however, the more they need that protection to the finer sensibilities that goes with a due regard for the claims of privacy. This does not mean that the parent must evade; it is simply a plea for an attitude less likely to be cultivated when the teaching is public.

The time to begin teaching is when the children ask questions of their own accord. These should be answered frankly and clearly. No modern parent relies upon the old myths. The truth can be conveyed quite cleanly and more profitably than by any of the old legends. A teacher of nature study brought to a class of six-year-old children two white rats. One she allowed the children to play with freely. The other she held in her lap and did not allow the children to touch. When they asked why not, she had them observe this other animal closely, and then told them that the rat would shortly be giving birth to baby rats. This was why its appearance was different and also why the animal was being handled with more than ordinary care and tenderness. None of the children tittered or showed anything else but deep interest in the facts and especially in this need for kindness to the mother. They were told that the baby rats would be born within the next few days and that the family of young rats would be left to the class to care for.

Practices are also needed that the home is in a better position to supervise than the school. Some parents still need to be told about certain sex dangers that come from trusting children to ignorant nurses. All these matters of detail about diet, clothing, washing, prolonged staying in bed, sleeping together, are beyond the scope of this chapter. One of the best things the school can

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

do is to encourage child-study groups composed of parents where these problems (and others no less) can receive the detailed, sound consideration that they eminently need.

Some twenty years ago when a flood of new light was thrown on problems of sex and social pathology, some schools and colleges were alarmed into offering courses of counsel. These courses, however, sometimes did as much harm as good. This is a subject to which not all children can give prolonged attention without injury. Our knowledge of psychology is still far from complete, and we cannot always tell which young people are more likely to take up this subject with the cool-headed objectivity it requires. In many there is every danger that protracted attention will merely excite the impulses which the teaching is expected to control and to allay. One can speak about the evils of overeating without stimulating the appetite for cake. Sex instruction, however, is different.

For this reason it is better that the teaching be distributed. The class in hygiene will have something to say on the subject. The director of athletics is sometimes unusually well fitted to help here because of the special regard pupils are apt to have for such a teacher. Biology and psychology, as we shall see in later chapters, have much to tell. The literature period offers many an excellent chance, and surely the courses in general ethics too. Spreading the teaching in this way is better than concentrating it.

The affirmative note always. Preaching against the unworthier uses of the sex impulses may do a certain good in some instances, but in the long run the surest way to shield a life against evil is to fill it with the big,

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

positive, forward-reaching interests and ideals.<sup>1</sup> The people who flock to the plays or read the books in which the appeal to sex is played up are those whose minds have little else to fill them. Whether children or adolescents or adults, those who are busy at interesting or excellent tasks have less time or thought for mischief.

### THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

In the main, one of the most promising appeals is to the idea that the young people will some day want to succeed in marriage and parenthood, and that this aim is more likely to be attained when people come to their unions rightly prepared. Particularly in view of the fact that the whole subject is vulgarized by commercial interests as in the movies, or clouded by novelists obsessed with sex, it is essential to stress the fact that a true marriage is much more than a matter of physical gratification. The passion is there undoubtedly, and rightly controlled contributes its great part to human well-being. The pity is that the passion is so often seen quite out of relation to other facts no less important.

One such fact is love, in which the passion is blended with devotion and respect. Passion of itself is too apt to be utterly self-regarding, as every tale of seduction tells plainly enough. Love honors its object. Love is unselfish. It is love, not passion, that prompts to self-sacrifice.

In the true union, the bodily intimacy is integrated

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<sup>1</sup> This matter of enlisting the feelings on the side of the better behaviors is treated at many points in later chapters.

A friend of Robert Frost's reports a conversation on sex morals in which the poet said that "perhaps reading Shakespeare was more likely to avert catastrophe than any amount of scientific talk" (p. 53), *Robert Frost*, Gorham B. Munson (George H. Doran Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

with the respect, the devotion, the loyalty, of people who genuinely love. Where this finds creative expression in parenthood, the union ascends to a still higher plane. Now the two people have the opportunity to unite still further the different best in each for the sake of calling out the best and highest in the children.

It is this that gives marriage the honored place it is likely to hold in spite of all the shifting winds of custom. It is unlike the temporary or casual relations for which the libertarian spirits plead. It is imperfect, undoubtedly; and at many points the life of the home in the future will be changed—for the better, let us hope. Needless economic strains will be removed. A deeper understanding of the psychology of mating will prevent many an unhappiness. But in the main, the experience of the ages has found no better way than marriage to reconcile the claims of the sex impulses with the ever present need of a right ordering of people's relations to one another. The miseries of unsuccessful marriage should of course not be overlooked. The libertarians, however, for their part ignore or minimize the miseries and the shames of the temporary union. They can be quite as romantic in glossing over the facts about the discarded mistress, the abandoned lover, the remorse, the revulsions where intimacy is unaccompanied by love and respect, as other people can be romantic and unrealistic about the failures of marriage. The way out is not a surrender to license. This is wasting the hard-won gains of the centuries in training human people to fundamental fidelities. The way lies rather in training people for the ordered freedom of those who respect the highest in others and in themselves.

Fundamentally the question is not one of impulses or

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

of natural urgings, but of how to direct these in the light of the best ideals that a person has trained himself to make his own. One can enjoy the indulgences which some permit themselves, but at the price of disloyalty to those finer leadings that most elevate the quality of our lives together. Those who believe that the chief business of the human race is more and more to encourage the emergence of the higher self in people, understand how that self is called out in any one of us to the degree that he respects it in others. Marriage, for all its failures, is still the best institution we know for promoting this paramount objective.

### ETHICAL PREPARATIONS

Hence the importance of ethical preparation for marriage. The seriousness of this phrase may evoke an ironic smile. Why interfere in this business of the gods? Do not "the best laid plans of mice and men . . ." ? Yes, they do go astray. They go wrong in housekeeping, in business, in politics, in schooling. In every human undertaking, there are abundant uncertainties. Yet these do not suggest that careful planning is altogether useless.

Parents insist upon preparation for college. They demand a high-school training shaped specifically to this end. Indeed, whenever changes in curriculum are proposed, parents raise the alarm that these may interfere with meeting the college entrance requirements. But college is after all a matter of only four years. Marriage, in spite of to-day's critics, is an affair of much greater duration, and of immensely more difficult adjustment, than college ever requires. Often we can only marvel at the successes achieved. Wise preparation can

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

surely do much to lessen the likelihood of at least some kinds of failure.

Moreover, what the pupils will seek in college depends on what they come prepared to find. If the children have heard college spoken of chiefly as the place where young people drink, or pet, or give themselves chiefly to athletics, it need occasion little wonder that these are the activities to which they turn when they get there. But in the many years before the boy goes to college, parents can help to turn his interest into better directions by discussing better phases of college life with him: how much this graduate of their acquaintance received from his university, or how some particular college is the one to attend for its art studies, or its liberal outlook on social and economic problems. What the young people will seek out for themselves can be considerably influenced by what their parents make interesting to them.

This is just as true of marriage; for our problem here is like others of the moral life. Howsoever parents may shrink from "fettering" young minds, they are already doing much to shape their children's attitudes towards marriage. Some cannot or do not conceal from the others at home that they regard their own marriage as unsuccessful. A child need not hear his parents quarrel. Often it is enough to note how they treat one another; the child forms his own conclusions. In marriage, as in other relationships, the daily example is one of the most effective teachers for good or ill. Parents are also shaping the children's views by what they say about other people's marriages. If an engagement is applauded because a girl has made "a swell catch," it need not be surprising that the children take the mercenary view. If they always hear the subject of divorce treated lightly,

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

they are more likely to imagine that every misunderstanding or even more serious disagreement must inevitably suggest separation.

On every hand, they are already being taught much. One important need is to correct the false ideas of marriage that children are likely to get from many books and from most of the movies. Because novels to-day, much more than the stories of an earlier time, tell what happens after the marriage, almost without exception they are obliged to portray marriages that either fail or come close to disaster. The only way to write an interesting story is to give the characters obstacles to overcome. Hence the usual triangle formula. There would be no plot if neither party were tempted to turn to somebody else. In plays and movies, the conflict, suspense, climax, must be even more dramatic. Small wonder that many youngsters grow to believe in all seriousness that sooner or later every marriage must come to this pass. It does not occur to them how many unions there are in which the two people are not at all bored with each other, and in which the triangle plot gets little or no chance to develop. Such marriages are worlds harder to tell about interestingly than the other kind. Before waiting for our young people to discover this fact for themselves, their parents or their teachers of literature can help them by an occasional word of discussion or interpretation.

In early adolescence, the difference between selfish passion and love is illustrated in *Ivanhoe* in the obvious brutality of the Templar toward Rebecca. Instances of the positive chivalry to which healthy-minded folk always respond are also abundant. Problems for discussion are found in the story of Steerforth and Emily in

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

*David Copperfield*, in the guilt that darkens people's lives in *Silas Marner* and *Adam Bede*. *Pendennis* and *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* have excellent pictures of the young man saved from the baser relationships by love and parenthood. *The Scarlet Letter*, besides its other uses, may serve to point an example of how finely a first-class artist can handle the theme of adultery. Unlike the so-called realist, Hawthorne begins with the sin already committed, spends no time upon details, but proceeds to his main point, the meaning of the guilt and the way of transcending it. Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, will repay study. In Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* is an admirable contrast between moral rottenness, illustrated by the disloyal wife, and the fidelity to trust exhibited by her husband, aware how the bank depositors rely upon his honor, and rising to that trust like a man. Dorothy Canfield Fisher's *The Squirrel Cage*, *The Bent Twig*, *The Deepening Stream* deserve reading.

Biography will also help. Here there is the special advantage of reality, even though biography has its own limitations too. Among books worth reading are *Canon Barnett* by his wife; *Pierre Curie* by Marie Curie; *A Sunny Life* by Isabel C. Barrows; *The Road to the Temple* by Susan Glaspell; *Thomas W. Higginson* by Mary T. Higginson; *Margaret Ethel MacDonald* by J. Ramsay MacDonald; *Alice Freeman Palmer* by George H. Palmer; *An American Idyll* by Cornelia S. Parker; *My Apprenticeship* by Beatrice Webb. Then there are such letters as those exchanged by the Brownings, or the two volumes of letters by Mark Twain, or the letters of Abigail Adams.

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

The proper time for all such instruction is very important. Great tact must also be exercised in keeping children from premature acquaintance with the seamy side of living. There comes a stage when they imagine that growing up means that now they are fully equipped to understand books about the shabbier types of life. It is no easy task to suggest postponement here; but it is not impossible. Without being too solemn, one can suggest that if age sixteen understands life better than ten, it may well be expected that twenty-six will understand still better. It is no more a slur upon one's immaturity to postpone the reading of a sordid novel than it is to wait for twenty-one to vote and to make legal contracts. However, the chief resource against the poorer kinds of reading will be found to lie in a rich love of the better kind.

As with *The Scarlet Letter* just instanced, it may help to say an occasional word on the need for acquaintance with first-rate understanding and first-rate achievement. An outstanding fallacy of our time is the belief that writers are truer to life when they deal with man's baser self. It is easy to forget that this happens to be the passing fashion of our particular age, a temporary revolt against other fashions. It is as mistaken, however, as to suppose that we can learn more about architecture by studying dugouts or tepees than a modern skyscraper or the cathedral at Chartres. Dante, Browning, Tennyson, to mention only poets, knew at least as much about love as those who specialize in love among intellectual or moral morons.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### WISE FREEDOM

The misleading influence of other writings besides novels and plays needs to be countered—not, we repeat, by extended lectures, but better by a word here and there when the conditions are ripe. The advocates of the looser relationship get their strength chiefly from protest against the cruelties and bigotries that too often go with the stricter standard. The father who casts out the pregnant daughter at a time when she is more than ever in need of kind treatment is a case in point. So is the old double standard that stoned the woman but excused the man. These methods will no longer do. Knowledge of contraception and prevention of disease is spreading every day. Old-fashioned fears and coercions can no longer be applied. Moreover, since this is the age of science, which has won its triumphs by experimentation, our young people hear the question put, "Why not experiment in the looser unions?"

But it is precisely here that the special opportunity of the age arises. Since the appeal to fear and coercion can no longer be so effective as before, all the more reason for building excellent lives on the principle of freedom. The real problem of liberty arises at the point where the external restraints are lifted. With less outward restriction, all the grander opportunity to build life upon the better principle. But the direction in which the experimenting proceeds is everything. The loose unions are not so new as they sound. The tug of the sex impulses is old. So is the world's experience with the harm, no less than the good, which these can do. Mankind has therefore worked out the institution of permanent marriage. Why not experiment in bringing

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

to light the grander possibilities of this arrangement? In this union, there are sublime possibilities for those who are capable of rising to them. Here, too, is a field for contribution to progress.

The rebels declare that marriage will be made a success chiefly if the young are taught birth control and if divorce is made freer. There are important reasons for both recommendations. Both need open-minded consideration. But when the best has been said in favor of divorce—the fact that there are indeed situations where the divorce is as necessary as a surgical operation—nevertheless it is a mistake to rest the success of marriage upon the hope that the door will be open to escape when the marriage fails. Birth control, which is also necessary, is likewise a way of flight. The success of marriage does not lie solely in having these avenues open. It lies in a much more positive direction—in cultivating the qualities of respect, consideration, unselfishness, capacity to share burdens, loyalty, even when fidelity chafes. Better than getting a divorce is living the life that makes the divorce unnecessary. Better than merely keeping the family small is fitting the children to be better than their parents. It is to these affirmative objects that we do well to direct our chief efforts.

In general, whatever training makes for ethical relationships anywhere is likely to contribute to successful marriage. The children who have their own way, the ones who are excessively mothered, or who have had their heads turned by being too often at the center of the stage, are likely to make nuisances of themselves everywhere and not least in their married lives. In spite of the many uncertainties, the risk of failure can be reduced by every training that makes for sportsmanship,

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

fair play, tact, courtesy, a sense of humor, ability to meet difficulties with a smile—each of us can make a list of the traits for himself. Marriage is an institution for those who are at least fairly grown up. It is bound to fail when the people who try to run it are not grown up but self-centered, intolerant, silly children.

### EDUCATION TOGETHER

Another agency is coeducation. For some a danger, this can be made one of the best preparations for successful marriage. The better attitude is described in an illuminating passage in the autobiography of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman physician in America. No college in 1847 would admit a woman student, but finally when she applied to Geneva College (now Hobart), the students adopted the following resolution:

*Resolved:* That one of the radical principles of a republican government is the universal education of both sexes; that to every branch of scientific education the door should be open equally to all; that the application of Elizabeth Blackwell to become a member of our class meets our entire approbation; and in extending our unanimous invitation, we pledge ourselves that no conduct of ours shall cause her to regret her attendance at this institution.

The American chivalry so admirably illustrated in the closing words of the resolution can still be found in many college students. How much support to the better attitude in the men was contributed by Miss Blackwell's own behavior is shown in the following:<sup>1</sup>

In the amphitheatre yesterday a little folded paper dropped on my arm as I was making notes; it looked very much as if

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Blackwell: *Pioneer Work for Women* (E. P. Dutton & Co.).

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

there were writing in it, but I shook it off and went on quietly with my notes. Some after-demonstration of a similar kind produced a hiss from the opposite side of the room. I felt also a very light touch on my head, but I guess my quiet manner will soon stop any nonsense.

Without extended lecturing, young people, certainly many even if not all, can be brought to understand the mischief in petting, how it is a cheap form of temporary gratification, how it leads easily to more serious transgression, how it cheapens the two people in each other's eyes. Some young men can understand how this breaking down of the barriers of reserve leaves the girl more open to graver misconduct with other men. A sense of chivalry will help here, as undoubtedly it still operates to keep some young men from being the first to lead a girl wrong. Once more, however, the chief resource against a dubious or hurtful pleasure is a life occupied with a better kind of pleasure and guided by sound ideals. People seldom plunge into wrong deliberately; more usually they drift. The function of high principles is to rally strength.

### IS WOMANLINESS OUT OF DATE?

Ethical intelligence has a special task cut out for it by the problems centering around to-day's equality. Women are not likely to be again the clinging vines they once were. Many, however, seem to think that this requires them to pattern all their conduct on that of the men. Is this the wisest use of their opportunities?

It is good that modern life, by lifting women to equality with men, has given them new opportunities to be sturdily self-reliant and businesslike. Few can want women to return to the restrictions which made them

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

faint, or weep, or play the coquette. Never again will they go back to subordination, or be content to bear as many children as the man alone decides, or merely to satisfy the man's desires. Women have been getting a taste of life at the center, so to speak, instead of on a circumference whose focus is the will of the males, even the desire of the men to be protectors and providers. A woman is no less fitted to be the capable mother if she votes, or attends public meetings, or gives part of her time to earning money, than if she continued to be the old-fashioned, shut-in housewife. Whatever interests her husband and her children is of vital interest to herself; and the homemaker of to-morrow will do her work better when her mind is thus enlarged.

But it is a pitiful waste of opportunity for women to imagine, as many in the first intoxication of freedom are now doing, that equality with men requires them to be mere duplicates. The desire for such identity is doing great harm to men and women both, in leading women to underrate certain gifts that are theirs uniquely. There are special aptitudes which go with the mother function and which are still essential to the civilizing and refining of mankind. Very few men possess, for example, the mother's capacity for patient, intimate care of children. While there are of course exceptions everywhere, by and large the mother is especially fitted to lead by that creative power which calls out the best in people through loving it and expecting it from them, even when they are scarcely aware of it in themselves and show very little of it to outside eyes.

Man's work, in the main, is apt to deal with things, woman's with people. Man in the past was interested in getting food, in making tools to get more food, in fight-

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

ing, and in making more effective weapons. To-day (even though exceptions come to mind) most men are still like this. Theirs is a world where they make things and distribute them.

Woman's chief interest is in people. Her mind is concerned over endless matters affecting her children's lives that men have never taken so seriously. She beholds in the newborn baby a beauty that her husband can see only when he wants to please her. Her interest in the children is paralleled by her interest in other people, her husband, her neighbors. Her husband's work with things or books or money does not give him the warm, personal interest in people as people that characterizes the woman, "guardian spirit," as she has been called, "of the personal in man."

The best homes are those that make the best use of this fact. It counsels women to be on their guard against the coarsening influences that go with the trend to equality. For all the hurly-burly of to-day's rapid change, there is no reason why women should permit a certain fine bloom to be rubbed off their demeanor, particularly toward men. The equalizing process should move in the direction of higher levels for both. The eternal womanly, as Goethe said, leads us up. The men themselves need from the women the civilizing, refining influences that women are especially fitted to exercise. Much as the old chivalry has given place to equal partnership, men still respect, and want to respect, the women who keep fine.

The need on the part of the children is unquestioned. Although this is an age of substitutes, manufacturing synthetic rubber, synthetic silk, synthetic almost everything, nevertheless to fill the lives of children with high

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

principles, understanding and regard for spiritual values, no substitute can take the place of the primary mother gift of loving, intimate nurture. The world's leading business is still the making of human souls. It will be done better when women treat their distinctive grace with seriousness.

### BELIEFS COUNT

This whole matter is at bottom a question of what conceptions of life our young people are taught—by example, by precept, by reflection and study, by habitual practice, by opportunity to get the best joys out of life—to keep foremost. The so-called right to be happy can too easily be translated into downright selfishness. Much in some of the psychologic teaching now popular is likewise unsound. Man is more than

A silly spark whose self-awareness gains  
It nothing but illusion, passing pains,  
More transient pleasures, throe or throb or trance,  
Amid th' electrons' unintended dance.

For all man's kinship with the lower orders, he is more capable than they of guiding and controlling his impulses. To teach that man is only the more developed ape is the more misleading because it is partly true.

The homely gift of self-control is by no means outmoded. It is indispensable to the truest self-expression. The remedy for the unjust repressions in the discipline of older times is not to flout the claims of self-control. Those who call themselves emancipated can be the worst slaves to caprice, to passion, to the tyranny of the animal in man over the distinctively human. Whether the moment's demand be the call of sex, or the craving for stimulants, or the hunger for excessive sweets, or

## HOMEMAKING AND SEX

the desire to satisfy a flaming wrath, nothing can absolve us from the need to view that claim of the instant in the light of the claims of a whole good life. Which kind of self is to be expressed? We are a jungle of selves. Some expressions manifest more truly than others the dignity of a being who is capable of looking beyond the moment to the direction pointed by his best ideals.

Boyd H. Bode tells the story of a farmer years ago who came to the city to have his photograph taken. "I suppose you want a bust picture?" the photographer asked. The man assented and seated himself. But after a moment or two he rose and asked, "And if you don't mind, I'd like you to get my head into the picture too." A crying need of the age is to keep the head in the picture and thereby do justice to man's loftier possibilities. The way to self-expression lies through self-discipline. The acceptance of binding ties, in the phrase of Felix Adler, is the way to unbind what is highest in us. With practice in translating these ideals into the daily contacts with other people, such a teaching can do no small part to prepare for the rewards which come with the true marriage. The old institution, in spite of its many failures, is far from bankrupt. When one considers how many make a success of it with apparently little or no direct preparation, it looks as if there were much good luck in the world. Perhaps too there is something vastly better. The attempt to increase this is worth the making.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMMUNITY HELP

What boots it at one gate to make defense  
And at another to let in the foe?

JOHN MILTON

FROM the preceding chapters it might be supposed that responsibility for spiritual advance rested upon the individual home. It does indeed, and all the work of parent associations and child-study groups to make individual fathers and mothers better fitted for this obligation is hugely needed. But the single home can be considerably helped or hindered in the performance of its function by the conduct of other homes, and especially by the collective conduct of the whole community, state or nation.

Reference has already been made to such contributory causes to delinquency as insufficient clothing or food; or crowded homes, sometimes taking lodgers as well; homes lacking in privacy, or located in dirty, uncongenial surroundings. If these were solely the concern of the individual parents, the problem would be simpler. But they are not. We have community funds, civic improvement societies, and other such agencies of social reform, precisely because there are difficulties that many a home is powerless to meet by itself.

It is well, therefore, to consider next where school and home, with so much excellent to offer to the community, need in turn what only collective action by the community can give.

## COMMUNITY HELP

For instance, the more awakened communities now employ visiting teachers to help the parents of the "problem" child straighten out his difficulties. These persons (who are trained social workers and teachers both) interpret the child to the school, explain to his class teachers what his interests and outside activities are, his home conditions, his handicaps, his abilities. They also interpret the school to the home, carrying directly to the parents specific recommendations for wiser guidance. They enlist the help of social agencies such as health clinics or settlements, or recreation groups. Because they have the time, which the class teachers have not, to visit the family and carry out all the other details needed in modern social case work, they are performing a very useful function in readjusting many a rebellious, lazy, or discouraged child who else might grow up a menace or a loss.<sup>1</sup>

### SLUM LIVING

But important as such work is, we must remember the economic and other social conditions that make it necessary and sometimes fruitless. Slum life, either in the big city, or in places like many a mining town, is one instance. To be sure, it would be exaggeration to say that all the good effects of family life are impossible in the tenement. Rich homes have their own records of moral failure too. In the worst of slum neighborhoods, one may find fathers and mothers loyal to one another and to their children; one may see brother and sister, child and parent, living together with the affection marking the best homes anywhere. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>1</sup> See publications of the Commonwealth Fund, New York, on this subject.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

cultivation of the better effects can be helped or thwarted by the surrounding conditions; and in more than one home the economic conditions make those effects harder, if not impossible.

Many so-called homes in America are still physically unfit for habitation. Let any one who reads this chapter take a good look at the poorer section of almost any industrial town.

Mud flats . . .

. . . Black sooty slime

Bepunctured here and there with rotting cabbage stalks,  
With paths from shack to yard made out of  
Skidding lumber slabs.

This picture fits more than one residence. If it were possible to build certain towns all over again from the beginning, could anybody conceivably want to repeat them on the lines now existing? Could he wish people to bring up children there?

Slum life complicates, where it does not prevent, the business of making home the hearth where the primal loyalties are kindled. Robert Ingersoll once asked, "Who ever heard of a man shouldering a musket in defense of a boarding house?" One of the influences working to-day against the better feeling is crowding. A powerful reënforcement to the sense of personal dignity is the feeling of privacy. Of this many children are deprived by life in a congested city flat. Some have no particular need to occupy a room by themselves, but to others it may mean much. Home sentiment is harder to cultivate where the family income is so small that it must be eked out by taking in strangers to board and lodge.

## COMMUNITY HELP

### RECREATION

In certain neighborhoods in New York it was found that many school children lived in homes so crowded that the noise made it impossible to study their lessons, and as a result special provision had to be made for them in settlements and libraries. The same is true about experiences more enjoyable than studying. Try to imagine a Virginia reel in the modern parlor, if there is one. Even without dancing, in many homes, and particularly in the poorer quarters, the old-fashioned "party" is often quite impossible. An important tradition associated with home is thus disappearing.

In a large modern city, natural opportunities to play are curtailed. The village green is gone. Mud for pies is difficult to obtain and dangerous to handle. People do not have big houses, yards, and barns. Those few who have lawns are usually not willing to sacrifice grass, flowers, and shrubbery to turn them into neighborhood playgrounds. Household equipment is rapidly becoming inappropriate for play purposes! It used to be the thing to crack nuts on flat-irons, to play horse with the carpet sweeper, rummage the attic and conduct circuses on the beds. But the electric iron and the vacuum cleaner cannot be risked in such juvenile enterprises, even if the people downstairs did not object to the noise. The attic is no more and the beds shut up in the wall. Or they are such precious pieces that they cannot be bounced on. Any adult can, if he will, think back on his own childhood and remember many delightful and developing experiences no longer in the children's play repertoire. There were thousands of opportunities for the exercise of ingenuity, inventiveness, leadership, humor.<sup>1</sup>

The passing of recreation from within the home has been hastened in our cities by the commercializing of amusements outside. Try as parents will to make their

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<sup>1</sup> Neva R. Deardorff in *Brooklyn*, September, 1929.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

homes attractive to their growing boys and girls, they find it hard to compete with the fascination exercised by moving-picture houses, dance halls, amusement parks, with their lights, colors, bands, and sometimes questionable hilarity.

Not all movies or talkies are corrupting by any means. Indeed, many do a useful job in calling out crude but sound judgments of right and wrong. They make available glimpses of romance, stirring adventure, good fun, which might otherwise be missed. The chief harm, however, is that children are supplied with an entertainment intended chiefly for adults—and frequently for very silly adults. Even though the wicked are always put down, nevertheless the vivid manner in which brutality, violence, marital infidelity, and other vices are portrayed leaves many a hurtful imprint. Whatever may be said for the adults who attend the movies, it is a pity that children should have their judgments so powerfully influenced by brainless, sometimes hysterical melodrama, or sheer indecency and vulgarity. When schools are doing their utmost to educate them to a greater humaneness or a broadened international and racial appreciation, it is unfortunate that an agency so much more vivid in its appeal than the school should offer scenes that put a premium on crude, melodramatic judgments of Chinese or Mexicans as always villains, or negroes as always clowns. "Peace in the schoolbooks has not very much chance against jingoism in the films." Nor is it any too easy to cultivate fine attitudes toward sex in the face of the tawdry, sentimental, if not vicious, fare supplied by the alluring personages on the screen. Censorship will not meet this problem. The best that censorship can do is to keep out the worst. Far better (as later pages

## COMMUNITY HELP

will show) is to use an instrument so powerful as the theater for productions that make for positive æsthetic and moral health.

There is no greater need in young lives than for hearty enjoyment. The professional purveyors of amusement know this; and they succeed in winning to their resorts crowds of young people whom the parents, owing to home conditions, cannot provide with proper recreations at home.<sup>1</sup> The task of the parents in winning their children away from the attraction of vulgarity and worse is thus made the more difficult. The healthier modes of enjoyment must meet a widespread and powerful competition in commercialized recreations outside.

### CHARACTER THROUGH WORK

Just as many a recreation has passed out of the home, so has work. In the older days, the family was more easily kept conscious of itself as a unit because every member in it did some part of its one common task. Father and sons did the farming, masonry, painting, carpentry, tool repairing. Mother and daughters cooked, brewed, churned, spun, and sewed. To be sure, participants in the same work can hate one another cordially. Yet the sharing of a job can also make for fellowship. Family feeling was more likely to be strong

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<sup>1</sup> The parents themselves may be sorely in need of education on this head. "In many of the cities it was reported that the lack of coöperation from the parents of minors found in the (dance) halls was the greatest handicap confronting the supervisors. This lack of coöperation was due sometimes to ignorance of what their children were doing, sometimes to indifference, and sometimes to the old belief that young people must sow their wild oats." Ella Gardner, "Public Dance Halls—Their Regulation and Place in the Recreation of Adolescents," *Children's Bureau Publication*, No. 189 (Government Printing Office, 1929), p. 52.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

where all joined in tasks obviously necessary for the good of each and all together.

Modern conditions have changed in this regard. It is hard now to name tasks at which every member works hand in hand with every other.

Another result is that children learn earlier in life to lose a certain respect for their parents. We readily esteem a person whom we see expert in the work we expect later to pursue for ourselves. In the old days, the son looked ahead to being a shepherd, a farmer, a mason, like his father, the girl to be a homemaker. To-day the son is much more likely to follow a different calling. The girl is not always so sure that she, too, will be a wife and mother. Or even if she does think of marrying, she may plan what many wives and mothers to-day do—to leave her household work to paid servants and spend the day earning an independent income.

This greater difference in vocation between parent and child is far from being bad. It is to be expected in a progressive society. But it must be paid for by a waning measure of that respect for elders which still constitutes an important element in moral education.

A related loss has come from depriving city-bred children of the chance to do useful work. Of all the influences in the formative years, none outvalues sharing the tasks of the household. The boy who helped his father lay a stone wall, prepare the soil or gather a crop, learned how time and energy are required to meet the world's essential needs. He gained something which is missed by the child whose home is completely dependent on janitor and storekeeper. He learned in real fashion something of the nature of responsibility through being held to account for the success or the failure of the

## COMMUNITY HELP

obvious work of his hands. To do an assigned job in carpentry, he had to think for himself and use all of his mind if he was not to waste labor and material. It was through doing work of this sort that most of the human race learned to invent and to think. To-day in the city most of the tasks we set to children are book tasks. Responsibility means answering questions from a book to the satisfaction of the teacher—a much less vital performance than being tested by the stability of the fence or the wall one has built with his own hands.

Awake to the danger of moral flabbiness in children cut off from these opportunities, modern school boards are more and more reorganizing the schools to allow work in wood, iron, clay, and to encourage the pupils to conduct their own assemblies, clubs, athletic teams, and other self-governing bodies. Some cities have not yet seen the light and are running their schools almost as if conditions had not changed. These have yet to provide equivalents of the work and the play that did their big part in character-building in the past. Richer parents everywhere are sending their children to summer camps in order that they may pick up there some of the traits that children in the older days acquired in real labors. The problem is hardly met, however, by two months in a camp and ten months in a world of elevators, servants, and costly cars. The children of the poor do not get even the two months of camping. In earlier times they combined manual work with hearty outdoor sports. To-day the danger lies in combining book work with the kinds of play possible in crowded, dirty, city streets. The way out will be more of such parks, playgrounds, and better schooling as our more progressive cities have already begun.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### THE NEW CIVIC PRIDE

These more fortunate communities are setting a good pace. Athletic fields, bathing beaches, band concerts, parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, recreation piers, libraries, community singing, public dances, fireworks (forbidden for private use) are now provided by the municipality. Once these recreations were only for the little people; now they are for all ages. Once they were only part-time affairs; now many are offered all year. Once they were a private charity; now they are recognized as vital functions of the whole community. Pure air, clean surroundings, upbuilding enjoyments, are no longer to be only for those who can afford to pay for them.

In many ways the whole material setting of children's lives is now inspiringly better. Fifty years ago when men like Jacob Riis were battling against the slums of New York, people were huddled in tenements with no light, with unventilated rooms where tuberculosis received every encouragement, without plumbing, with a single pump in a dirty back yard to supply all the water for twenty families. Street after street was like that, and people who felt the civic shame of it were very few. Things are much better now in New York and elsewhere, and where they are not, more people are aroused to the need.

The evil goes back in large measure to our absorption in making money. With few exceptions, the age of modern machinery judged a town primarily on its efficiency as a place for doing business. Cleanliness, clear skies, beauty, wholesome recreation, were afterthoughts, as they still are in some quarters. "Everybody for him-

## COMMUNITY HELP

self." Indeed, even business efficiency is now lessened because nobody foresaw what automobiles would do to streets originally planned for other traffic. This is the least of the hurts done by automobiles. We have yet to make our streets safe against crippling and death. At a recent national conference on child health, Dr. Ray L. Wilbur said: "When I was a boy, we were taught to look out for rattlesnakes. But now rattlesnakes kill only a thousand people where the automobile kills a hundred thousand."

Contrast the usual situation with what the cities of the future will offer. One such forecast is offered to us in the city of Radburn, New Jersey, "a town for the motor age." Here is a city planned in such fashion that, among other advantages, street after street is made perfectly safe for children at play and for every pedestrian. Much more of this sort of thing will have to be done. City planning is now a very anxious concern of many communities that wish they had exercised sufficient foresight years ago. Because the automobile and the airplane are shortening distances, there are states where the planning embraces not cities alone but whole regions.

## BEAUTY AND HUMAN DIGNITY

All this is more than a matter of sanitary housing for our poor. Cattle, too, receive such shelter. Human beings need beauty, the freshened inspiration and enhanced sense of dignity that beautiful objects are fitted to suggest. And the beauty that all require is not the decorated surface of an ugly object, something added to a thing essentially hurtful, or useless, or badly designed. It is beauty of a more basic, structural type, which the town planning of to-day and to-morrow will have in mind.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Because we are wealthier, we can do better than the ancient Athenians. These people made every effort to have their entire city a place of inspiration, so beautiful that to this day architects and other lovers of art still journey there. Beauty, the Greek realized, had its positive moral suggestion. It suggested wise balance, sanity, proportion, stateliness of soul. It curbed anarchic individualism, and spoke of harmonious, just relationships. In the immortal dream of one of their wisest, Plato sketches an ideal community where all these influences for better life in the young are kept sternly high. He had back of him, besides the thought of Sparta's military experiment, the experience of Athens in at least certain efforts to have the outward setting of their collective life promote rather than hurt the best development of the young.

For we would not have our guardians reared among images of evil as in a foul pasture, and there day by day and little by little gather many impressions from all that surrounds them, taking them all in until at last a great mass of evil gathers in their inmost souls, and they know it not. No, we must seek out those craftsmen who have the happy gift of tracing out the nature of the fair and graceful, that our young men may dwell as in a health-giving region, where all that surrounds them is beneficent, whencesoever from fair works of art there smite upon their eyes and ears an affluence like a wind bringing health from happy regions, which though they know it not, leads them from their earliest years into likeness and friendship and harmony with the principles of beauty. . . .

The modern age will do better than Plato desired. He was thinking of the education of the "guardians," the select few who were to rule the others. Democracy wants the best to be the portion of everybody.

The frame must be worthy of the picture, that is, of

## COMMUNITY HELP

the spiritual wealth to be cultivated in the dwellers. Everything depends on how keenly we feel the importance of this aim. There is no inherent reason why an age whose machines have already accomplished marvels should not move on to making those machines more genuinely the servants of man's better life. Some people have already learned that there is no good reason for advertising signs to spoil our roadsides. A factory need not be ugly. We can remember still further that even a whole factory town should be first of all a place where streets and homes are bright with the laughter of children at play, where not only things are made, but, of immeasurably greater consequence, where human souls are made. No goods turned out by machines can begin to compare in importance with high-grade lives.

### POVERTY

Let it be repeated that the children of wealthy parents, too, have their grave moral problems, such as the temptation to undue frivolity. Most of the difficulties treated in this book are found in the homes of rich and poor both. Some, however, like the congestion of the city, are peculiarly the problem of the poor. All the difficulties are aggravated when, to the burden of other mal-adjustments is added the weight imposed by poverty.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> One of the committees reports that out of 45,000,000 children in the United States 35,000,000 are reasonably normal; 6,000,000 are improperly nourished; 1,000,000 have defective speech; 1,000,000 have weak or damaged hearts; 675,000 present behavior problems; 450,000 are mentally retarded; 382,000 are tubercular; 342,000 have impaired hearing; 18,000 are totally deaf; 300,000 are crippled; 50,000 are partially blind; 14,000 are wholly blind; 200,000 are delinquent, and 500,000 are dependent.—*President Hoover in an address before the White House Committee on Child Health and Protection, November 19, 1930.*

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

If the rich father, for example, cannot bring up his son properly, he can engage tutors or companions to make up for his failure. He is better able to give his children a clean, healthful home. He can provide better food. He can more easily engage expert medical and surgical care, especially when there is instant need. He can give his children a chance to play in the open, or to encourage their various aptitudes through study with the ablest masters. He can prolong their years of schooling beyond the time when the poorer father is obliged to send his girls and boys to work.

A bulletin entitled "Health Insurance, Its Relation to the Public Health,"<sup>1</sup> discusses the difference between the income sufficient for proper living and the actual conditions in America, and concludes:

It is evident that underlying all other economic factors affecting the wage earners' health is the fact of poverty. The other conditions that have been discussed—unhealthful living and working conditions, insecurity and irregularity of employment and income, inadequacy of earnings of heads of families and the necessity for earning of wages by mothers and children—these and other such conditions are but incidents of poverty.

Child labor was never a problem of the rich, nor was the labor of women. When daughters and wives went into the factories (in the last half of the nineteenth century, the number of women in the textile factories increased 221 per cent as compared with the men's 53 per cent), it was always from the homes of the poor. A double hurt resulted. The future mother as well as the actual parent needed all her physical health for the proper nurture of her children. But the excessive strain of monotonous factory life undermined many a woman's

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<sup>1</sup> Government Printing Office, 1928.

## COMMUNITY HELP

health. A better social organization will refuse to let its factory products be made at the expense of the health of potential mothers and their children.

Children, as we have seen, are usually brought up best by their own mothers. But this requires that the mothers be free to give them the necessary attention. Can the mother do this who goes out for a day's work? A "day nursery" where young children are kept while the mothers are out doing laundry or factory work, is at best a poor makeshift for the mothers' care of the very young. The older child who comes home from school needs his mother to watch over him, and save him from the contamination of evil companionship. The woman who works because she wants to follow some other career than motherhood can engage some one to look after her children as a special and individual charge. Even this inferior substitute is denied to the woman who goes out to work because she must. When delinquent children finally reach the juvenile court, from which class of society do they chiefly come?<sup>1</sup> And the moral hurt done to children in the absence of parental protection does not have to land them in the court to be a serious hurt.

More advanced states now recognize these facts. Child labor is going. A century ago, twenty per cent of the workers in America's cotton factories were under twelve years of age. The work week was seventy-two hours. Whether the child labor which still remains should be abolished by act of the individual states or by Federal statute is debatable. But nobody any longer defends it. On the contrary, when it is mentioned to-day, it is with

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<sup>1</sup> See report "Crime and the Community," Crime Commission,  
244 William Street, New York.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

apologies. This sense of shame with regard to an evil once accepted as matter of course is a distinct social gain.

So, too, is the fact that many states now supply widowed mothers with pensions in order to keep them at home. Children deserve every possible chance to get the full benefit of their mothers' care.

They need their fathers as well, just as they need their mothers for something more than the physical attention required for the breeding of mere healthy animals. They have minds and souls that are most truly developed where father and mother both give of their best ability and aspiration. But parents are unable to do this when their work leaves them too fatigued or too worried for anything better than to vent the resultant irritation in beatings or scoldings. Fortunately modern machinery is steadily reducing the time of labor and increasing the leisure. Vocational guidance, training, and placement are preventing many a maladjustment. Modern business is asking the psychologist what it can do to make the working hours as cheerful as possible. Many employers are awaking to the fact that it is good business (since the workers are consumers) to pay high wages rather than low.

But it is the things left undone that cause the trouble. Secretary of Labor James J. Davis was quoted in the papers in January, 1929, as saying in reply to a request from British unemployed coal miners for help from American, that although wages here are undoubtedly higher than elsewhere, "nevertheless 86 per cent of our population are poor." And this was before the great slump of that year.

## COMMUNITY HELP

### EXAMPLE COUNTS

For all these reasons, it is plain that a thoroughgoing program of moral education must bear in mind more than the responsibility of the school or the individual home. For other reasons too, the best of personal teachings may sometimes plead in vain. Homes in which only jazz is heard can scarcely be expected to breed creative musical artists or people who appreciate great art. Yet though we grant this, we often show an astonishing indifference to practices in the community which work squarely against the ideals held up in school and home.

Our political practices are an instance.<sup>1</sup> Contrast what our children hear about civic ideals and what they see in the actualities. When teachers and parents consider what callings their young people are to enter and be trained for, it is characteristic that many hesitate about advising them to go into public life. Though excellent people have held public office, yet the odor attaching commonly to the word "politician" tells its own story.

Improvement undoubtedly there has been. The scandals recalled when we mention Credit Mobilier, Whiskey Ring, Star Route frauds, Black Friday remind us that other periods had occasion to blush. There was a time when railroad officials gave free passes (and not always out of charity) to office-holders high and low, including judges. Elections were marked by fraud, by violence, even by murder. John Adams tells in his diary how a friend of his was defeated because after voting for "the first time," the repeaters went over to the tavern to

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<sup>1</sup> For the more hopeful side of the picture, see Charles E. Merriam, *Chicago* (The Macmillan Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

drink, and on their return to vote again, found the polls closed.

For all the improvement, however, the gap between our teaching of civics and the realities that our children behold is still too wide. In city after city, though there are office-holders who unite ability with courage and honesty, there remain many of whom we can be heartily ashamed, the kind who moved Mark Twain to say, "If there is a solitary office in the land which majestic ignorance and incapacity coupled with purity of heart could fill, I would run for it."

In some we are not sure even of the pure heart. The mayor of a large city makes a fool of himself on the question of textbooks used in the schools. Among his associates are men whose honesty is not above suspicion. But he and these men are graduates of public schools; and more to the point, it is the votes of other such graduates that elect them. Typical was the remark of a parent to his child when a certain politician was proved corrupt: "He isn't a real crook. He only stole from the government." It is not that such voters and officials are utterly bad or utterly ignorant. But after these many years of exposure to schooling in civic virtue, why does so much of the less desirable part of the mixture still keep coming to the top? And can we hope that a textbook course in civics will influence future voters more potently than what they see right under their own eyes every day?

The leading social worker in America has this to say about a deep-seated influence upon the youth of our land:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Addams, "A Decade of Prohibition," *Survey*, October, 1929, p. 10.

## COMMUNITY HELP

The residents in a settlement, like other good citizens, are much concerned as to the effect of all this law-breaking upon the young. There is no doubt that a spirit of adventure natural to boys in adolescence has been tremendously aroused by the bootlegging and hi-jacking situation. It is as if this adventurous spirit were transferred from the wild west into the city streets. A boy was recently arrested in Chicago, who had come from Indiana for the express purpose of seeing "the brave men who were able to keep the police at bay." City boys in bootlegging neighborhoods have many opportunities to participate and even to collect hush money or at least to help by guarding secrets as to location of bootlegging outfits. They are quite often used as outposts, and are expected to give an alarm if a policeman or hi-jacker appears to "be wise" as to the location of the hidden activity. If word is given that the police are on the trail, everything is set in readiness for protecting the plant. Everything depends upon who shoots first, for shooting is inevitable and a matter of self-protection on both sides. How general the carrying of arms by boys, for one reason or another, has become, is shown by the recent killing of a police officer when he was arresting five boys who had been drinking and were evidently out for mischief. They told him to let them off or they would shoot him, and finally succeeded in doing it because they outnumbered him in firearms.

Bootleg liquor is integrated with vice and crime quite as liquor always has been. Roadhouses where liquor is sold are notorious for their prostitution, and automobiles make it possible to transport patrons quickly to these disorderly roadhouses, also affording concealment for the intoxicated young people returning together. In addition to a boy's natural love of automobiles is the association of banditry. An automobile bandit is more successful and more dangerous than the romantic wild west robbers of fifty years ago, or the bands so recently to be found in remote parts of Sicily, Spain, and of Mexico. A boy in the state reformatory tells how easily he and his gang, who owned a Ford, used to hold up young people who were returning from the roadhouses, finding it easy to take their money because they were always more or less intoxicated.

The taint of corrupt politics is widespread. We pass laws to scare off gangsters and gunmen; but we forget

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

that gunmen are bred by the demand for their services, and that their services are often highly useful to the politicians who protect them.<sup>1</sup> There are communities where strong-arm work still helps to win primaries, to win strikes or break strikes. When problem children find their way eventually into gangs which have learned how political pull is exercised to shield the lawbreaker, it need not surprise us that character education in the schools can often be of no avail.

### WHERE TRADE WINDS BLOW

School and home alone can do little against some of the forces at work in the community around them. Back of corrupt politics is always corrupt business. The bribe to the public official comes from business men who want contracts or franchises or other favors. These persons are often among the top sections of the "nice people"; and for this very reason the influence of their success is all the more harmful.<sup>2</sup> How much of the cynicism of many a college graduate is due to his awareness that more than one man of standing has played the business game shabbily?

Not that all business by any means is corrupt or even mercenary. The level of business ethics has been rising steadily. There is much less cheating of the customer. Competition is more decent. The humanity in the workers is more respected. There is a growing conviction that business should raise itself to the plane of the better practices in the professions, and can yet do so.

But here too, as in politics, there is enough of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Courtney Terrett, *Only Saps Work* (Vanguard Press).

<sup>2</sup> See F. C. Howe, *Confessions of a Reformer* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

## COMMUNITY HELP

poorer practice to work powerfully against the ideals taught in school and home. For instance, how often do we not hear that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possessth"? Yet modern business employs every conceivable device to whip up the appetite of people for more and more things—useful, silly, ugly, beautiful, no matter what, so long as sales resistance can be overcome. Alarmed at the increase in embezzlements and other thefts, certain surety companies have been financing a campaign to teach pupils common honesty. The effort deserves well. Moral backbone is needed precisely because there are temptations. But for some people there is such a thing as moral overstrain; and one cannot help wishing that necessary as we recognize the teaching of honesty to be, we were equally aware of what an accepted business practice is doing to complicate the problem. When we reflect how fiercely people are stimulated by every known appeal to the hunger for possessions, it is little wonder that the weaker-grained go wrong, or that others become quite money-minded. The marvel is that more do not.

The way out is to move upward—the process cannot but be slow, our impatient hopes must be reminded—to a civilization in which business takes its due place among other human concerns, and especially where profit-taking (if any) is subordinated to the matter of first importance, the ministering to human excellence. There is much to ponder in these words of the distinguished American historian:<sup>1</sup>

Apart from initial tastes and nature, a man is bound to be molded by the aims, ideals, and whole nature of the career to

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<sup>1</sup> James Truslow Adams, *Our Business Civilization* (A. & C. Boni), pp. 29-31.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

which he devotes practically his entire energies and time. For the business man, the main function of work, his main preoccupation, and the point from which he views everything connected with his work is necessarily that of *profit*. The hallmark of success in business is the extent of profit a man gets out of it. An artist may find no public for his wares but, if he is doing a great work, he will be supported by the opinion of his peers. A doctor may struggle in a country village with nothing but a pittance but he has the satisfaction of a noble work nobly done. A man like Asquith may spend his whole life in the service of his country and yet retire as prime minister with the income of a bank clerk. But a man who spends his life in business and ends no wealthier than he began is voted a failure by all his fellows.

Now this primary and essential preoccupation with making a profit naturally tends to color a business man's view of his entire world, and is what, in my opinion, mainly differentiates business from the professions. I say this after having spent about half of the past 30 years in business and half in professional work.

. . . If the fundamental idea underlying our civilization is to become that of business profit, it is inevitable that we shall decline in the scale of what has hitherto been considered civilization. In the atmosphere of business, what becomes of the artistic spirit, of the professional spirit, of the pure scientific spirit?

Civilizations rest fundamentally upon ideas. These ideas to be effective must be those of the dominant classes. In making the business men the dominant and sole class in America, that country is making the experiment of resting her civilization on the ideas of business men. The other classes, dominated by the business one, are rapidly conforming in their philosophy of life to it. If the leaders are not humanely rounded personalities, what shall we expect of the mass which patterns itself upon them? In a word, can a great civilization be maintained upon the philosophy of the counting-house and the sole basic idea of a profit?

## THE MORAL EVIL OF WAR

Another outstanding moral hindrance that requires a freshened sense of the new social ethics is war. The

## COMMUNITY HELP

revolt against war is one of the most hopeful tendencies of our age. In earlier days, war, like poverty or disease, was taken as an affliction put upon mankind mysteriously and unescapably. We know better now. We know much more about the quite human blunders that cause it; and many highly promising efforts are afoot to abolish it altogether. It will pay us to review the justification for such attempts, in the light of the thought underlying this chapter—that all the forces in the social life should be turned to the encouraging of man's better being.

War wrecks the homes of vast multitudes, and on a vaster scale to-day than ever before, because war itself has grown to be an affair of whole groups of nations against other groups. The money spent in destroying homes in the World War could have rebuilt all of the worst city slums the whole world over.

War blinds or cripples the fathers, turns them insane, or makes their children orphans. It kills the men who might else marry and become the fathers of new generations. It does not discriminate in its choice of cannon fodder, but carries off the best of possible fathers no less readily than the worst.

In every country during the World War there was a marked increase in juvenile delinquency. Fathers or sons who might have assisted the mothers in looking after the children were away at the front. The excitements of war time made school and the other normal restraining influences seem utterly dull and tame in comparison. Violence, destruction, barbaric passions of all sorts were in the atmosphere that the children breathed, and the weaker succumbed.

Millions of people at this moment in Eastern and

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Central Europe are still underdeveloped because as children, thanks to the war, they were underfed. Other millions are paying in undernourishment for the taxes and other increases in the cost of living occasioned by the conflict. Every addition to the military budget in one country is the excuse for a possible rival in the next war (and who can tell when this may be?) to increase its own appropriation and to take from its fathers and mothers so much more in the shape of taxes.

The indictment against war as the enemy of the home might be extended. A mere glance at the pictures and the index in such a book as Homer Folks' *The Human Cost of the War* tells enough. The pity is all the greater when we reflect that parents, the world over, have, as parents, the one common need to make this a better home for all earth's children without exception.

## CHAPTER V

### WORK IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

All education begins in work. The thing of consequence is what we do. . . . For man, woman and child, the first point of education is to make them do their best. . . . In resolving to do our work well is the only sound foundation of any religion whatever.

JOHN RUSKIN

OUR leading task is the making of better persons. Asked whose business this is, most people would probably reply, "Home, school, church." But this omits one of the most effective educational agencies there is. Factory and office also mold lives for better or for worse. Making a living is part of making a life; and a wiser to-morrow, recognizing the high importance of this ethical datum, will shape its practices accordingly.

The best product of human labors anywhere is a higher grade of personality in all who are in any way affected by those labors. It is a delight to look into the shop windows along our handsome boulevards. The goods there displayed speak eloquently of wealth, of beauty, of magnificence. But in the making of those products, what kinds of human being are made?

To many people a thought like this suggests only the hurtful effects of our machine civilization. They think, for example, of the factory worker who, day following day, does nothing else but punch a few holes in a sheet of steel, or the girl in the laundry who irons collars. Many persons see so little hope for improving human quality through the day's work that they put all their

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

hope upon reducing the work time, and offering chances for self-improvement through the recreations of the leisure hours, especially since the work week is steadily being shortened. Against any such view, this chapter proposes that the task of shaping better life is best effected in and through the daily work, even more than through the hours of leisure. The fruitful use of idle time is by all means to be promoted, but still better is the right kind of work. If the work is unsound, the activities of the leisure periods are bound to be infected. When the work itself makes better people, the contribution of the leisure hours will in turn be still higher.

The real value to a man of the "living" that he earns reflects the real value of the work or vocation by which he earns it. A "living" that will satisfy his nature as a man cannot be earned by a vocation or work which leaves his nature as a man poverty-stricken, stunted or starved. If his work or vocation is neither personally enjoyable to himself nor socially valuable to his fellows, the "living" earned by it will correspond. The amusements of his leisure will then reflect the inanity, the devitalization, the aimlessness, the unskilled monotony of his labor; his sins, as well as his virtues, will be monotonous, to say nothing of the obvious fact that his "living," which is only another name for his life, is already considerably consumed in the dull hours or meaningless years devoted to earning it. . . .

Per contra, the worker who enjoys his work gets a good "living" in the actual process of doing that work, and having played the man on that field is less likely than his unfortunate neighbor, described above, to play the fool when he knocks off.

We make a mistake in setting up a sharp division between the work which earns our "living" and the "living" that is earned. We are living all the time we are earning, and if we want to live well or happily, must live well or happily then. And it is equally true that we are earning all the time we are living—though it be only the devil's wages of boredom and disillusion. Earning and living are not two separate depart-

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

ments or operations in life. They are two names for a continuous process looked at from opposite ends.<sup>1</sup>

Much in to-day's civilization needs to be improved. But whatever hopes we may entertain, work itself is hardly likely to be altogether abolished. A few things in life come for the mere asking. Most of them, however, come when somebody or other works for them. We may quarrel with the fact if we will, or make the best of it and treat this necessity to work as one of our chief opportunities for better personal growth. The importance of this moral agency comes home to us when we think how the grand words in every language like "honorable," "reliable," "faithful," refer so often to how people do their work. "Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seed fields rise instead, and stately cities," said Thomas Carlyle, "*and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby.*"

### WORK AND CHARACTER

At the least, work does something beneficial to the worker by being more interesting than unbroken idleness. People with nothing to do but loaf are far from being the contented folk some imagine. They are dissatisfied and have to invent, or pay others to invent for them, all sorts of ways to kill time. They spend many hours in games; and these are artificial devices to get fun out of overcoming resistance. There would be no fun in golf if the ball were as big as an orange. The difficulty is the attraction.

The right kind of work is not only more interesting than idleness: it develops the mind as idleness never can.

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<sup>1</sup> L. P. Jacks, "Breadwinning and Soulsaving," *Journal of Adult Education*, February, 1929.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

If human beings were born like animals, capable at birth, or shortly after, of supplying all their needs by the instinctive methods the bird uses in building a nest, human brains would still be to-day on the animal level. The higher powers have been developed by the need to meet difficulties intelligently—that is, by other methods than instinct or blind routine. The idle person is not likely to be pointed out as a specimen of distinguished mentality.

Work of the right sort does this further good to the worker himself. Nothing else can plant so deep the roots of a true self-respect. For one thing, the worker knows that he is no parasite, living on the labors of others without adding something useful of his own. One may steal food, or gamble for it and win it by luck, get it as a present, or work for it. We need not dwell upon which of these ways is best. Somebody or other must work for the things that people require; and those persons are most entitled to respect themselves who know that they are doing their share in the common job.

In all sturdy character self-respect is a prime essential, and fewer agencies are better adapted to develop it than the knowledge that one can do some useful thing with particular ability. It is significant that the Salvation Army worker, when he tries to raise people up from degradation, seeks to learn what kind of useful work these people are specially able to do. It is not only that thus they will be better able to support themselves: they will also be more likely to respect themselves.

A generation ago, William James was so impressed with the connection between good work and a world more truly civilized than to-day's that he uttered a remarkable plea for a training to make work the moral equivalent

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

of war. He was psychologist enough to know that as long as war is more interesting than peace, the task of the peacemakers is going to be disproportionately difficult. A summons to war for any cause, righteous or less so, stirs great multitudes to enthusiasm, because most of their daily work is so dull and boring. William James appreciated this. He knew too how youth loves the appeal of war because war calls upon the capacities for adventure, for devotion, and team spirit. Why, therefore, he asked, do we not turn these energies into useful, interesting work for the community, whereby our young can feel assured that they are sharing in a great collective job? Imagine that just as a community turns out to welcome its boys home from war, people gather to cheer their boys because the boys of Pittsburgh, let us say, have beaten the lads from Philadelphia in mining more coal for the winter supply of their city. Or here is a community honoring its sons, because they have constructed a breakwater in record time, or fought great forest fires on foot or from airplanes. Such was James' idea of a moral equivalent for war, in labors on fishing fleets, digging tunnels, reclaiming waste lands, working on railroads. Some day we shall apply this idea, and for girls no less than for boys. Nursing, teaching, cooking, sewing, medical service, all the tasks people are called upon to do in war, they will be trained to perform as a service of peace for the sake of a peaceful and better civilization.

During the World War people saw, if only for a time, that there was a better reason for working on a farm, running a railroad or a mine, than the fact that one could make money as a result. They were told, "Do your bit. Your work is as essential as the soldier's."

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Why should an idea like this be packed away, as we store winter garments over the summer, until the next war?

Or why should the idea of work as essentially a service be confined only to the professions? The word "service" raises a smile when we think of the cant that has grown up around it. But many a good idea can thin out into mere talk; and the service idea, rightly conceived and applied, offers great hopes. The producer is of course entitled to his pay. He must earn his living. The merchant to whom we go for the fruit that otherwise we should have to journey to the farm to buy, must be solvent, not out of business. The pay is also a tangible way of showing that we appreciate the service. The problem is less a matter of profit versus service, than of how the two are to be related.

Already we take the service motive for granted in certain occupations, where it is something of a disgrace to put first the thought of income. We think less, for example, of a physician whose mind is bent first and last upon his fee. Some four centuries ago, when the great scholar Erasmus was taken ill in Louvain, he was visited by a doctor who said that Erasmus had the plague, but who never came near him again. A second doctor did likewise. A third said it was not plague, but was too frightened to come again and sent his servant instead. Compare this with the conduct of Dr. Jesse Lazear in fighting yellow fever in Cuba, or with the many doctors, unknown to fame, who have given their profession an increasingly honored standing.

The same is true of other professions. Teaching, the arts, nursing, scientific research, statesmanship, are ranked higher because those who follow these pursuits

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

are expected to keep foremost the service they can render. But if the physician's work, to take but a single instance, is so manifestly a public benefit, so is the other work which makes that service possible. Druggists must prepare the medicines, and factories the surgical instruments; steamers and railroads must bring the raw materials. The moment we list the occupations necessary to provide a single possible medicine or the paper in which to wrap a powder, we see that lumbering, mining, carpentry, engineering, transportation, are all united as services. Human beings need food and hence the farmer. They require shoes, dishes, raincoats, houses, coal or oil. All the gross physical necessities as well as the decencies and refinements of life need the ministrations of the world's numberless managers, makers, and distributors. Service should mean promoting the highest needs in producers and recipients.

### SPECIFIC NEEDS

All this may perhaps seem quite abstract and remote from the realities of such working life as we actually see around us. Let us therefore look at some concrete applications. In the first place, if the service to be rendered by one's work is to be a better service, more training in vocational skill will be needed everywhere. The years ahead are going to see America call less and less for the self-made, crudely trained worker of earlier days and more for people well prepared. Life is now more complicated. The pace of competition is keener. The demands for efficiency are more specific and exigent. We do not call any more on the self-made lawyer or the self-made doctor or dentist. The self-made farmer will give way in the future to the graduate of the agri-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

cultural college. The same will happen in politics, in commerce and finance and industry. As the vocations progress, we shall require a more highly trained, more professional type of merchant and manufacturer. We shall also need the men and women labor leaders who can direct their fellow workers wisely. Indeed here, in our industrial civilization, is a highly important calling for which as yet very little specific schooling is offered.

We must therefore convince our young people that good as it is for them to want to be self-reliant, and to earn a living as early as possible, nevertheless they must continue their prevocational schooling just as long as all the conditions permit, and then keep on learning even after they have begun their work. Making a living is to be but a means to the making of lives, and the making of a life is a task never ended.

Producers must give the public what it wants; but vocational ideals must, in the second place, educate workers and consumers into higher grades of wanting. Both need education in wise spending. In many of our high schools, in one part of the building, the boys and girls are taught thrift, and in another a salesmanship that is often little better than a device to coax savings away in any kind of purchase, whether sensible or foolish. Extravagance, such as automobiles bought by taking a second mortgage on a home, are bad for everybody concerned. If money is to be put into circulation, let it be through sensible buying.

An essential part of the curriculum should be a course in home economics. Every producer is also a spender. He should learn the difference between thrift and stinginess, between spending for the sake of ostentation and spending for the things that make life better. All makers

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

of homes, future and present, should understand how their spending influences production, markets, factory conditions, home life, life in general for everybody. Producers must of course supply what people want; otherwise the offerings will be rejected. But of all the things that consumers want, which can the makers supply with the cleanest and fullest respect? What can the buyers do to encourage such better production?

Journalism, for example, may be the sorriest of shabby trades, or it may be an admirable profession. Thomas Nast was cartoonist for Harper's Weekly in the days when New York was being robbed by Boss Tweed and his crew in office. A powerful aid in rousing the conscience of the city was the weekly cartoon by a man whom neither threats nor offers of bribes could silence.<sup>1</sup> Men of his type can still do much. In spite of the growing tendency to syndicate newspapers, to kill competition even in a single city, and especially, in many a town, to make the papers mere vaudeville shows or circuses, there are still brave and high-minded journalists who make a noble profession of their calling. If vast multitudes care only for the brainless sheets, one reason is that as yet not enough journalists have learned to make important news as interesting as the trivialities. Here is an unusual opportunity for the useful exercise of talent.

Every calling offers a wide variety of choices among the uses to which human strength and skill can be put. If it is possible early in life to choose between two careers, one the making of products which are of questionable benefit and the other where the service is beyond

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<sup>1</sup> See Albert B. Paine, *Biography of Thomas Nast* (Harper & Bros.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

debate, can there be any doubt which is to be selected while the time for the sounder choice is still here?

Not all people judge their work by its money income. Louis Agassiz, who was engaged in a series of absorbing biological researches, received several tempting offers to go into business. Asked by a friend why he refused, he replied, "I haven't any time to make money." There is nothing necessarily bad about making money. Perhaps most of the people in the world would jump at the chance to make more than they are getting now. But not all would do so. It is possible that most would refuse if the income were to be obtained dishonorably. Many would refuse, as this scientist did, for other reasons.

To some men their work is as much the opportunity for self-expression as painting is to the artist. What the musician gets out of composing his sonata, many men get out of work in steel and stone, or out of managing and directing people. The more we can interest the future worker in keeping motives of this kind uppermost, the better. And still better, when he can be genuinely proud of what his work offers to mankind.

An earlier chapter dwelt upon the ugliness and the other hurts incidental to our rapid industrialization. It is good that modern engineers are waking up to these ills and asking themselves whether these need always be, and whether the next period in the machine age cannot honor the best of human wants more deeply and widely.<sup>1</sup> Ours is a machine civilization. In spite of the Ruskins, Tolstois, Edward Carpenters, and Gandhis, we can scarcely think of going back to the age of handicraft.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the symposium by engineers, *Toward Civilization*, edited by Charles A. Beard (Longmans, Green & Co.).

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

In the single item of beauty, machine products are now better than they were fifty years ago, and there is no necessary reason why a machine civilization should be a shoddy civilization. Every worker should therefore be stimulated to feel that he has a share in trying to see how modern science can be used to make goods still more serviceable than they are now, and, where there is a place for beauty, more beautiful. Workers are proud of being connected with an organization that turns out a high-grade product. We all have an interest in rivalry and competition. The spirit of rivalry can be turned into seeing how every worthy product of human labor is made a still better product.

### FUNDAMENTAL WANTS

A third need, if work is to be truly a service, is not only an increased production of those things that most benefit people, but also a better distribution of them. The good already done here needs to be extended. Say what we will of the evils still to be expelled from our capitalistic system, the great fact stands to the credit of that system that in the past hundred and fifty years, larger populations enjoyed decencies and luxuries than at any time in the world's history. More food, more sanitary housing, better light, clothing, recreation are now available to vast multitudes because modern capitalism has made production so enormous and so comparatively cheap.

But no thoughtful person can look out over the world to-day without seeing also that there are still huge masses who are improperly fed, clothed, sheltered. Perhaps one reason why strife between worker and employer is still so acute is that in the minds of many workers

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

the one haunting fear still lurks, insecurity. At any moment people may be deprived of their work and left dependent upon charity. Men who are sure about their futures are much less likely to break out into revolt than those who feel insecure.

Breadwinners may be thrown out of work suddenly through no fault of their own:

Every now and then, a million or more men are added to the numbers of the unemployed, even though there are abundant tools to work with and materials to work upon, abundant credit for productive uses, and a world in dire need of the goods which these idle men, by the use of these idle machines, would gladly make out of these surplus materials. Men, machines, money, and materials—all in superabundance! . . . Why?

Is there no way in which we can continuously use our vast resources of men, machines, money, and materials, thus sustaining production and employment, and bringing more of the good things of life to the people generally, especially to those in greatest need?<sup>1</sup>

A sudden slump in an industry may put a whole population out of work as it did in a western town (a one-industry city) a few years ago. Working men who had managed to buy their own houses were forced to sell, if they could find buyers willing to settle in a "dead" town, and move away. The cost of this, added to the loss of wages, told in the food and other things bought for the children; it told in the length of time the fathers were able to allow their children to remain at school. To the thoughtful working man, few specters are more terrifying than the fear that at any moment, and for more weeks and months than he can calculate, he may be out of work, compelled to move into poorer quarters, and

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<sup>1</sup> W. T. Foster and W. Catchings, *Road to Plenty* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), Preface.

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

to lower the standard of every provision he makes for his family.

Modern civilization has increased production and distributed the products more widely than ever before. Its next great job must be to make that distribution in every way still more just and effective.<sup>1</sup>

The service of the physician has been mentioned. There are still multitudes who do not get his service, but the pitiful substitutes that are offered in the name of charity. Many rural districts rarely see even second-grade doctors or nurses. The lawyer gives his services to those who can afford to pay him. The legal-aid societies have to give charity to those who cannot afford to buy the services of the lawyer. Our abundant illiterates in America remind us that the services of the teacher have not yet reached everybody. Whether the benefits are professional in the technical sense or the services offered by commodities, the distribution is still far from being all that every thoughtful student could wish.

These are grave problems. They raise many disturbing questions of fundamental political and social ethics. But running away from them only makes things worse. Because they have been neglected, we have such a world as to-day's, where alongside of the creditable achieve-

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<sup>1</sup> The recent depression has undoubtedly opened more eyes to this sad truth. "We are much in the position of the town which needed a more abundant water supply, built a magnificent new reservoir, but neglected to provide any substitute for the small, rusty and defective pipes and outlets through which the increased supply was conveyed to the citizens. Our goods supply has been amazingly enlarged. But the pipes and conveyors and outlets are too small and are rusty with age. Our factories stopped because they produced more than this antiquated distributive system could carry off."

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

ments of the machine age are all the mockeries. The problems of an ethicized economics will not be settled by soap-box orations, or by denouncing agitators, or by complacent sitting tight on the part of those who have reason themselves to be satisfied with what life has dealt. They will be settled only by education in the spirit that asks, not "How is a better organization of society going to affect my comfort or fit in with my pet prejudice?" but "How genuinely can we make better the services that should be the first objective of the world's work?"

### WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS

And last, another step toward making the idea of service a reality is to bring about better relations between workers and employers, and between both these groups and the public that receives their offerings. At present not enough workers see that their work is contributing anything of high importance for mankind. Hence great numbers do it sullenly or with frequent revolt. Both groups fight each other and among themselves, because they think of their work as aimed only or chiefly at getting the spoils. They quarrel over the division of the spoils—"If I let you get so much, there is that much less for me." There is no way by which this fight is ever going to end permanently until all concerned get an entirely new point of view. Until then, we shall continue to get what we have now, a series of temporary truces. Permanent peace in the industrial world will come when the attitude of all concerned is completely shifted—that is, when work is looked at chiefly as the chance to perform needed services.

Men do not quarrel over the opportunity to increase production or better the distribution or raise the quality

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

of the service. They quarrel only over the spoils or over questions of prestige. So we come back to the one thought underlying this chapter. The chief need in vocational ideals is an education that teaches everybody to regard himself as a worker, to think of his work as the chance to build up his self-respect by sharing honorably in the one big job of the human race, the job of so doing one's tasks that all who are thereby affected are helped to make themselves better beings.

The years ahead will see a more democratic way of living during the hours of work. At present the employee lives under political democracy, but in his work he is, with few exceptions, under an autocracy. He is free only to exchange one boss for another or to go into business, if he can, and become a boss himself. Workers' representation in the conduct of the business is one step toward a more genuine democracy. Says Felix Adler:<sup>1</sup>

Industrial democracy indeed is commonly advocated on other lower grounds, for instance, as a means of protecting manual workers against oppressive action by employers, and as a means of maintaining better standards of living, and of securing a voice and vote in all matters that directly affect the workers. But in this list the chief value of industrial representation is left out. This consists in promoting the moral development of all the workers, the lowest as well as the highest functionaries. By progressive development of a moral being is meant progressive ability to follow disinterested aims, increasing capacity to identify oneself with the interests of the larger group to which one belongs, such an expansion of one's nature as enables one to further the complex and diverse ends of the society of which one is a member, not as if they were one's own, but as being actually, in the true sense, one's own. A share in the control and government of industry according to the function which

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<sup>1</sup> "An Ethical Programme for Business Men." Copies of the address can be obtained by writing to 2 W. 64th Street, New York City.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

one fills is the most effective education in ethics conceivable. Ideal government is not government with the mere consent of the governed, but government as the expression of a deliberate group-reason and of an enlightened group-will to which each one contributes in his degree.

These are matters we cannot consider too earnestly. The fact that not all persons care to think about them is no excuse for staying contented with their lower standards. Everything depends on the aims one keeps foremost in the face of powerful urgings to forget them. If the only object is to make a living (plus all the tempting superabundance), people need only ask themselves what gifts they possess and how they can capitalize them most handsomely. But what if they hold steadily in mind that making a living is only a means to making a life? We make our own lives to the degree that we encourage other men and women to make the best of their lives. What is most worth while in ourselves is liberated to the extent that we help to set free the best in others. Our most fruitful opportunity to do this is much less in our leisure, or in our charities, or our other part-time philanthropies, than it is in our work.

### WORK AND CULTURE

It is evident that an education along these lines will be free from that narrowing "efficiency" against which the advocates of culture protest. Essential as skill is, it is only one among other means to the making of lives. If we forget this fact we shall be tempted by the gospel of Maximum Output, as some communities have already been, into turning out mere filing-clerks, mill-hands, manipulators of typewriters, as fast as the law allows.

No more important task awaits us than reconciling the claims of work and culture. We speak ordinarily of work

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

and culture as two distinct things, one having to do with the serious business of life, the other with the hours of relaxation. There are few conceptions that have done graver damage. For all our political democracy, we make a sorry travesty of the democratic ideal when we send one class of boys and girls to the colleges to acquire culture and another, much larger, class to the technical schools to learn how to be more proficient underlings. Both groups suffer from this separation. Culture is sterile, at best a mere parasitic growth upon the labors of others, when it is cut off from an active understanding of and coöperation with the hard labors done every day by the great masses. Work, on the other hand, is deadening when it has no feeling of the sublime part that it can be made to play in the shaping of human destiny.<sup>1</sup>

An experiment in the better direction is under way at Fieldston, the prevocational school of the Ethical Culture School in New York. Its aim is to prepare those who will do their part to bring about higher standards in commerce, industry, and homemaking, to harmonize the claims of work and culture by focusing both upon the supreme purpose suggested in these chapters.

Such people, it goes without saying, must be efficient. At the same time—nay, in order to spur them to make themselves more genuinely and finely efficient—their minds will be stimulated by those outlooks that constitute the joy of the truly cultured. Culture will come from looking backward, about us, and forward to the future, to understand the relations of work to promoting nobler life. How does work to-day affect the life of the home?

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<sup>1</sup> H. Neumann, *Education for Moral Growth*, 142ff.; 153ff. (D. Appleton & Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

What kinds of homes did people make for themselves in the past? What manner of homes will a better work make in the future? Trace the history of the home from the tent erected by the wandering tribe of early times to the habitations, good, bad or mixed, that constitute our modern cities. What were the civic problems of those earlier workers? How does their work to-day affect the actual operations of the democracy we profess? How has it come about, for instance, that the labor union, the chamber of commerce, the club of women voters, exercise the influence upon our politics to-day that could never have been deemed imaginable in the days when patriarchs, barons, kings were the only rulers, and the workers but slaves or serfs? And what is to be the future of these interrelationships? What is right in the grievances uttered by the radicals to-day? What is just to all concerned in the various programs put forth for the social reform of to-day and to-morrow?

Here is ample material for developing in the worker the mind of the genuinely cultured. Consider what it would mean to study how the work of the world has influenced science and in turn been affected by the scientists' discoveries. There is no more fascinating story than the history of how, from the day when man first discovered the use of fire up to the invention of the airplane, this broadening knowledge has changed his life. Within the last century and a half, the Industrial Revolution has affected the daily behaviors of the whole world far more profoundly than the work of kings or even of democratic lawmakers has done. It would mean much if every person engaged in commerce and industry to-day had a broad understanding of these transforming effects for both good and ill. All of us could study to advantage

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

how modern business in its turn has stimulated the work of the scientist. It was business that sent out Columbus and other explorers to find new trade routes in the world. Many of the studies of Pasteur arose from problems put before him by business men. We speak to-day of the pasteurization of milk. Pasteur was led to his discovery when the wine merchants of France asked him to tell them why certain wines turned sour. He was led to further researches when the silk-growers asked him to study the troubles that had befallen the silkworms. So the tale might be told at great length of how, backward and forward, science and industry have touched each other and in consequence profoundly affected the behavior of men and women.

Consider again what strides we should make toward a more peaceful civilization if our young people were led to study frankly the relations of industry to war and peace. In some respects, commerce has been a potent civilizer, breaking down barriers of mistrust and creating ties of understanding and good-will. The merchant traveling from land to land has done a great part to overcome provincialism. But there is another side to the story, the tragic tale of how nations have fought one another for commercial advantage, or how they have shamelessly exploited backward people in distant lands. If, in spite of the Washington Treaty, feeling between the United States and Japan ever ran high, it would not be because the Japanese wanted to send a few more thousand emigrants to California, but because American business would clash with Japanese business over business privileges in China. There is nothing in the essential nature of business that makes for international strife. On the contrary, a business rightly organized will make

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

the interchange of commodities and service the great opportunity to interchange ideas and services more finely conceived than ever.

Special education for women was discussed in an earlier chapter. They too will need the same training as men for the callings they will enter. In addition, it will be remembered that even though a woman expects to enter law, art, insurance, or any other occupation once monopolized by the men, she must also be prepared for her work as mother and homemaker. Part of her job as homemaker can be shared by nurses, cooks, housekeepers; but nothing can ever exempt her from the need of being an intelligent mother to her children. She will require the psychology and the hygiene and the other studies now given to young women who expect to become teachers. The mother herself must know all that the teacher is expected to know, and more.

In all callings, the brains and the initiative that have done such notable things for America thus far will eventually work out vocational courses whereby, in and through their special training, the young people will also get the broad and inspiring outlooks over life that people want in culture. Why should not the worker, in and through his work, be made conscious of the splendor of the temple, building through the ages, that his work is helping to erect? The point of view is everything. Technical skill is just one essential to the main objective, the doing, each his share, in furthering mankind's higher life.

### THE DISADVANTAGED

What about the worker in the blind-alley occupation: the coal miner, the girl who pastes labels all day on

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

tin cans, the boy who does nothing else but run an elevator up and down? Dozens of occupations are so mechanical and monotonous that if they have any effect on the minds of the workers at all, it is only to make those minds still more inert and inferior. What kind of cultural education shall we give to the girl who washes dishes in the cheap restaurant? Even if that kind of work is done by machinery, somebody must operate the machines.

The usual answer is that there is no sense in trying to make anything of such people because they simply have not the brains; if they had, they would get out of these poorer jobs of their own accord quickly enough. This is true, but only in part. How do we know of what people are capable until we have tried far more zealously and wisely than we have done so far? Our psychology is still in its infancy. Before we say that any group is forever and hopelessly unfitted for anything except the poorest types of work, let us give such groups every possible chance. We cannot base our judgments of these people on the meager education which is all that many communities are now willing or able to provide. A few voluntary organizations and some schools are doing much to save the maladjusted boys and girls, the "hard cases" in the classroom, from going utterly wrong, by giving them a special training. Such work is still in its merest beginnings. When these methods of discovering the aptitudes of people and of *improving what powers they have* are made a hundred times better than now, only then shall we be entitled to class this or that group as fit for lifelong slavery to the jobs that do nothing to remake the worker.

One thing at least we can do in the meantime. There

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

is no permanent reason why all the ugly and non-beneficial jobs must be done by the same people every day and every year. There can be a more just distribution. Why cannot the elevator boy run his elevator a few hours of the day and spend the rest of the day in another kind of work? Or perhaps the blind-alley jobs can be the work of some people for a few weeks, with the rest of the year spent mainly on work of a better kind. We can do these things quickly enough when we do more than merely say that the human being is the most important consideration and get down to business about making this human concern come really first.

Not enough people are awake to these problems. They are unaware that here is anything at all to be concerned about. The human race may never be able to find satisfactory answers for all its important collective problems. But surely much will be gained when more of us grow intelligently interested in them.

If all this concern for the inner life seems academic, we may remind ourselves how important it is even when it comes to getting the outward products. On every hand we hear that the workers must produce more commodities, more services, and better ones. But anybody in touch with the facts of production knows how important is the mind and spirit that the worker brings to his work. An enthusiastic worker can produce more in one day than a sullen, discontented, or indifferent craftsman can do in three. The waste there is in strikes is enormous. There is even greater waste from the half-hearted way in which thousands of workers go at their jobs. Continued hostility, carelessness, indifference, lack of enthusiasm, cause huger losses than occasional strikes. The

## WORK IN PRESENT AND FUTURE

men who could succeed in tapping the productive powers now unused in the workers of our country, it has aptly been said, would add more to the wealth of America than if they discovered half a dozen gold mines.

But the inner wealth is even more important—the wealth in the shape of better personality developed in the habits people put into their work. We shall get more of that wealth when we make it the leading object we set out to reach. What are those “human needs” that we profess to honor? We know well enough that every group of workers needs every other group. The farmer feeds men who in turn bring the tools and the science that he requires to do his work better. The merchant and his associates supply the homemakers with the things required for health, decency, refinement. The artists offer the beauty without which souls shrivel and starve. The home and the school prepare the young for these and all other callings.

But suppose that when we looked at these callings and at the ties by which they unite people, we purified the conception of the bond and the chief objective. We should see how the healthy body to which the food and the good housing minister is to be the effective instrument of the mind. Suppose we saw further that this mind is good when it assists what is genuinely human in each to encourage the most essentially human thing in everybody else to stand forth in full beauty. Trained to take such a view of work and life, no worker in any group, whether in home or shop, could be guilty of bad workmanship. We could not endure for a day to let the conditions remain which now breed mistrust, resentment, waste, strife. Even the factory itself, like the home or the school or any place where work is done,

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

would become just as truly as any church—nay, even more so—a place where character is made. Personality is built not by what we hear or say or wish but by what we do. Here is the chief wealth we are to produce. All our other wealths, in the shape of tools, commodities, skills, are to be used to increase these personal riches, beyond all power to appraise.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOCIAL SPIRIT

There is a city to be built, the plan of which we carry in our hearts, in our heads. Countless generations have toiled at the building of it. Be it ours to carry their uncompleted work further.

FELIX ADLER

HOME, community, work, we have seen, may encourage the more admirable qualities in people to emerge, or may hinder. But the influence exercised by environment is only half the story. The other half has to do with the creative influence exerted upon the environment by individuals. Some children, for example, may be degraded by slum surroundings; others will, on the contrary, be roused to wipe those slums out. If school, home, church, are to do their best work, thwarting social conditions must be changed; but the very process of changing such conditions is itself a way of elevating character in those who do the changing.

We can hardly expect young people to care very much about simply becoming better persons. They demand some much more challenging outlet for their energies. One such direction is offered by a living sense of all that this world of ours might be if it were made over on nobler lines. The need, as these chapters have sought to indicate, is beyond all question serious. Rising to the need in the right spirit is as fruitful a chance for moral growth as can be found. The social obstacles like poverty, ignorance, prejudice, war, are challenges to the creative spirit. They constitute part of the ground to

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

be cleared, new frontiers to take the place of those crossed in earlier days by the covered wagons. If our young people want to do adventurous reconstructing, here is rich opportunity.

Not that this exempts them from the need for self-amendment. Many a fervent champion of democracy is himself an autocrat at home, quite intolerant of persons who do not love his favorite scheme as warmly as he does. But social remaking dare not be an excuse for neglecting deficiencies in one's own makeup. The best of social reconstructing keeps its eye upon the nobler capacities in the men, women, and children thus helped. These better possibilities are expected in the remakers themselves, and they can no more be slighted than a genuine teacher can forget the need to keep always learning.

But before we can get very far with this matter of social rebuilding, we must face two problems of special difficulty. One is the question of how free our schools may be to criticize the conditions around them. What, for instance, shall teachers of civics or ethics do when they know that right in their own town, public officials are incompetent or corrupt? The other problem is raised by a healthy unwillingness to be busybodies. The word "reformer" sometimes carries a bad odor. Why should it? Let us take this latter problem first.

### MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS

Just what is our own business? Where can we draw the line between our private affairs and the business of others?

Nobody wants to be a meddler. What nuisances such persons make of themselves! Small wonder that attend-

## SOCIAL SPIRIT

ing to their own affairs sums up for many people all they want to do. Certain types of reformer bring the word reform into deserved discredit. Instead of doing hurt by spreading gossip, these achieve some good no doubt, but to the neglect of a much-needed occupation with their own affairs. Charles Dickens' pious Mrs. Jellaby was interested in converting Africans; but her own children, ferocious with discontent, were sadly in need of her ministrations. She has ample company.

Indeed an easy way to shirk the wise managing of one's own life is to be a social crusader. There is a certain thrill about going to meetings, getting up and protesting, framing resolutions. Very often people who are all aglow about the transformed society of a century from now, find it difficult to keep to-morrow's engagement punctually. Sometimes they are above such trifles as paying their dues in organizations which they have already joined. Social crusading is a very fascinating substitute for attending to one's own responsibilities. If anything can add to the thrill, it is to be engaged in crusades to reform other people. "Nothing so needs reforming," said Mark Twain, "as other people's habits."

Far better a manly attention to one's own affairs than many a profession of altruism. It is quite possible to fritter one's life away in answer to the endless calls of others. In Washington Irving's story, Rip Van Winkle was always running errands for his neighbors. He was everybody's handy-man, always obliging. He never refused a request to help mend a fence, or gather a crop, or prepare a meal, or fiddle for a dance. But though he won much amiable good will, he did not win respect. There were debts to himself and to his own family that he did not pay. To give oneself is assuredly a duty.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

But it is necessary at the same time to have a self that is worth the giving.

For all these reasons it does look as if good sense began and ended with minding our own business. And yet something within us protests against contentment with any such negative attitude. It is well that our young people understand why.

### WHAT IS OUR OWN BUSINESS?

First, there are claims of gratitude. If everybody in all strictness minded nothing but his own business, all of us would be much worse off than we are. To attend to our business we need, for instance, a measure of good health. But this cannot always be cultivated by seeking it only for ourselves. Many diseases are catching. In former times, plagues spread from house to house with frightful devastation. To-day we are less alarmed. We ride in the cars next to a man who once had some infectious ailment of skin or throat. But we need not be afraid of contracting it. The man has been cured. He was poor; and he was healed because certain people in our city give their annual contributions to hospitals and dispensaries. These persons were not exactly minding their own business. They were under no compulsion to contribute to the sick man's cure. But because they did something better than think about their own interests, we others escape disease.

Minding our business means for many of us literally the business in which we earn our living. We certainly could not earn it if we spent most of our working hours on other people's affairs. But again, we could not even earn our living but for people who were thinking of something wider and more inclusive. There is scarcely

## SOCIAL SPIRIT

a single article sold to-day which does not require the application of modern science. Every fabric needs dye stuffs. Every machine needs electric power. Every efficiency device is in debt to chemists, physicists, biologists, psychologists. Goods cannot be imported and exported unless sailing the seas is reasonably safe. For this there are lighthouses on dangerous shoals, there are coast surveys, coast patrols, compasses, barometers, all sorts of mechanisms that came from the work of men of science.

We cannot earn our living in a city without the protection of police, and without the help of the various municipal departments. We pay for these out of our taxes. But suppose there were no civic organizations to see that the taxes are not wasted? There are, besides, many advantages for which we do not pay and, more to the point, which we could not enjoy if it were not for other people's public spirit. We want to live in a city because it has advantages over living in the country. But city life brings congestion; and we want open spaces, hills, water, grass and trees. These we get in a public park. But our parks offer their joy to the countless thousands to-day because years ago public-minded men saw to it that the city of the future possessed this advantage. These people were not thinking of their own private benefit.

Mention was made of how business to-day owes a debt to scientists of the past. It needs the services of trained men and women now. More and more it is drawing upon people who have gone through college. But colleges would not exist without the people who create or sustain them. There is not one college or university in all America that is supported entirely out of the tuition fees of the students. These fees do not pay for the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

original cost of the land and the buildings, or for teachers' salaries. They come from the gifts of the public-spirited. Even municipal and state colleges owe to friends and alumni many advantages not provided in the public budget. Every student in a college is a debtor to men and women but for whose generosity the cost of tuition would be altogether prohibitive to all but the wealthy.

And what about the work of the teachers? They receive salaries of course. But many a teacher does more than his salary calls for. Some teachers do only the minimum required; some do less. Many of us, however, know, from our own experience, teachers who do much more.

So the tale might be told of debt after debt. We are so used to our public schools that we forget about their origins; or because we pay for them in our taxes, we imagine that so doing we are absolved from any further obligation. Our schools would never have been able to do their present work but for the devoted labors of people who gave something more than their share of the taxes.<sup>1</sup>

### REPAYING THE DEBT

It is an old story repeated in every generation. Somebody has to care if justice, not greedy self-advantage, is to govern the dealings of men and countries. If the sick are to be made well, if wrongdoers are to get a better chance to redeem themselves than our present-day prisons offer, if children are to receive the best opportunities to make excellent men and women of themselves, if war is to go and nations are to dwell together in trust-

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<sup>1</sup> Read, for instance, the biography of Horace Mann.

## SOCIAL SPIRIT

ful, hearty friendships, somebody must first care, make the beginnings, and carry the work forward.

At point after point we are the beneficiaries of people who minded their own business but to whom this was not exclusively self-advantage. What we make of this debt is in literal truth a matter of honor. A man of honor pays his bills. The mail brings him bills that sometimes he would rather not receive. But because he is a man of his word, he pays. There is a bill of vaster size than any that the postman ever delivers. It is the debt we all owe to the men and women who came before us in life, or are living with us now, and who have made possible for us the advantages we enjoy. It takes imagination to see that debt. It takes also a sense of honor to appreciate the fact that there is only one way in which we can pay the debt—to do our utmost, in our day and generation, to pass on the heritage, not merely unspoiled, but enlarged, enriched.

Not enough of us see this. The owner of a certain chain of English newspapers was injured in an automobile accident and barely escaped death. Thankful to have been spared, he distributed to various public institutions the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds. There are persons like him who lack the imagination to see that their gifts are needed even when no such shock enters their lives. They make people sometimes pray for more such educative accidents. It is not the positively bad alone who delay progress. It is the smug, the contented, the dull-witted, who seem to need the auto accidents to wake them up.

We can make a beginning with our children. There are many schools now where the boys and girls tax themselves as if they were a club, and spend these dues for

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

milk, or clothes, or a Thanksgiving dinner for a needy family. The help that they can give is of course trifling. But the main object is that they learn early in life what people can do by pooling even their little. Still more they should get the idea early in life, that thinking of the needs of other people is just as essential and regular a part of one's life as thinking of one's own advantage. We want them to continue this habit all their lives. We do not want them to be like those many persons in every community who spend, and spend lavishly, on every kind of pleasure, but suddenly see the poorhouse staring them in the face only when they are asked for some much needed contribution.

What is the reward for being social-minded? Sometimes the question puzzles us. It is like asking what reward is there in being a friend. One answer is that people cannot all accept the idea that everybody lives to himself and for himself alone. They know in their hearts that any such reading of human nature, true as it may seem on some occasions, is a libel. They realize from their own experience, that something inestimably precious would go from their lives if getting and spending for themselves were all that mattered. In a world where there are great necessities which can be met only by the united action of people alive to such needs, they want to make their own lives count and last beyond to-day and to-morrow. They know that tempting as the thought often is to drop their responsibilities and follow the calls of ease, the deepest roots of their self-respect are nourished by faithful practice in sharing these common and highly important burdens.

Here then is one of the most vital requirements in any program of education for character. High-grade per-

## SOCIAL SPIRIT

sonality requires not isolated or self-centered attention to virtue, but a give-and-take between the individual and his world. A life is made by what it tries to effect in a world of other lives. The best service we can offer to our young people is to help them make better men and women of themselves by rising with us to the challenge offered by mankind's highest needs. All these many advances are to be made in shaping human life on loftier patterns. The chief personal need is to grow more and more fit to share in this joint, leading responsibility.

### FREEDOM FOR TEACHERS

If all these matters are to receive attention in school and college, it is plain that many communities will be obliged to permit greater freedom of discussion than they now do. We are committed to democracy; and if frank, sane, enlightened discussing of vexed questions cannot bring us any nearer to answering them aright, what in the world is there but force and the appeal to emotion?

Force is always a confession of the failure to persuade. It cannot be the method of a democracy intent on progress. Nor can the method be propaganda, in the sense of partisan, and especially underhanded, "educating public opinion."

President Morgan of Antioch College, pleading for a sane search for the causes of our collective difficulties, speaks of the way cats can be flung over a clothesline with their tails tied together:<sup>1</sup>

Finding themselves in distress and close together, each cat blames the other, and they fight furiously. Human nature, too, lays its trouble to whatever is nearest. Intimate associates tend to blame each other for irritations that are due to circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> *Antioch College Bulletin*, March 15, 1926.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

or inevitable in such relationships. Teacher and pupil, husband and wife, labor and capital, France and Germany, furnish endless examples. Wisdom examines into causes. . . .

Only while we keep our tempers can we hope to see true relationships. When the fight begins, all chance ends for looking into causes. Neighbors realize this, but in other relations, where policy often is controlled by animal instinct, rather than by reasonableness, any disposition superior to that of the cats over the clothesline frequently is looked upon as visionary or treasonable.

Most children come from homes where only one newspaper is read. If this paper is prejudiced against Chinese, negroes, Englishmen, laborers, or bankers, surely the school should try to suggest fairer judgments. When an industrial strike breaks out, the vast majority of people are tempted to view it only in terms of what it does to their comfort, their business, or their particular emotional bias. They want the strike "settled"—which usually means ended at once, and not so much by a right solution as by a victory for the favored side. Public opinion on these and all other such matters is badly in need of calm, intelligent, and fair-minded study.

We speak of the conflict between truth and error as the great conflict of the centuries. It is not. Truth prevails over error easily when it has free chance to operate. The real conflict is between truth and the interests which are arrayed against telling the truth. There are barriers erected on all sides by prejudice, interests, superstition, and convention, "emotional blockades" against the publishing of the truth; and they are all survivals of the despotisms of the past which held men's minds as well as their bodies in jealous bondage. The body has escaped now pretty generally, but the liberation of the mind is a much more difficult task.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David S. Muzzey, "The Millennium of Mediocrity," *The Standard*, Vol. 12, p. 179.

## SOCIAL SPIRIT

To Lord Acton, a scholar who spent a lifetime in gathering material for a history of liberty, the most impressive achievement of the human mind was "the emancipation of Conscience from Power, and the substitution of Freedom for Force in the government of men." The liberation is by no means complete. There are institutions where teachers are dropped for unorthodox views on biology and religion. In others they may say what they think about evolution but not about Russia or the British Labor party. Men who have prospered under a high tariff are disinclined to let students examine whether it would be better for tariffs to be lower. Many a gap exists between behavior and professed ideals of democracy. Highly undemocratic repression is often defended by the statement, "I believe in liberty and progress as much as any man; but—." In a memorable sentence, Edmund Burke once declared, "Few are the partisans of a departed tyranny; and to be a Whig on the business of a hundred years ago is very consistent with every advantage of present servility"—which, translated into American means, "Praise the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, but do not apply it." As a Western newspaper put it, "I am against the injection of religion into politics; and therefore I will never vote for any candidate who is not a Protestant." There are many instances where our practice is a sublime caricature of professed ideals.

### COMPLICATIONS

This weighty matter was made the subject of investigation by a special committee of the National Education Association. The report says:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Committee on Propaganda in the Schools (National Education Association, July, 1929), p. 31.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

The school should guard against casting the minds of children in certain inflexible molds modeled along the lines of current practice. They should realize that altered conditions in the future may make changes necessary in currently accepted customs or institutions. They should be made conscious of the fact that social problems exist today and will arise in the future, and should be given some understanding of the methods whereby society solves its problems. This does not mean that the schools should be thrown open to every "ism" which styles itself the way to Utopia, but rather that children should be given that flexibility of mind which makes for social evolution, rather than social stagnation.

The problem bristles with difficulties. Few can envy the conscientious superintendents of schools on whom every fanatic in the city urges that his pet doctrine be taught to the children—and at once. If all the schemes for saving America from this, that, and the other evil by instructing the children found their place in the day's program, there would be time for nothing else, even if, by some miracle, all the conflicting plans could be brought into a measure of harmony. Other difficulties are listed in the able N. E. A. report just cited.

There are, however, these obligations resting upon the communities. They can insist that after all due weight has been accorded to the arguments on behalf of silence, no teacher be dropped solely or chiefly for uttering advanced views. A community gets the kind of political administration which its degree of civic sense permits. The history of our politics tells us what happens when "the nice people" take their civic shame easily and what happens when they wake up. Likewise in the problem of justice and liberty in teaching. More and more of us must realize that it is no longer possible to shield our youth against the currents of thought now sweeping through our age. To permit a frank discussion of vexed

## SOCIAL SPIRIT

problems under scholarly leadership in the classroom is surely better than to have our boys and girls pick up ideas from undisciplined and irresponsible persons outside.

### THE MINORITY VANGUARD

More of our pupils (and their elders too) need to learn how all the gains for decency, public honor, social justice, have come from the work of minorities. Religious freedom, political liberty, women's suffrage, all had to fight their way.

But for the rebel in his breast,  
Had man remained a brute.

When Congress in 1894 levied a tax of 2 per cent on incomes of \$4,000 or over, the law was denounced by men like Joseph Choate and Governor Hill of New York, as "socialistic, confiscatory, prompted by envy on the part of the lazy, and utterly sure to kill initiative and destroy the republic." Somehow we seem to have survived in spite of income taxes now huger than the proposal of 1894. But there were persons then who thought in all seriousness that any discussion of so "un-American" a measure was harmful or useless. The stand-pat spirit that sanctifies the custom of one age as if it were an unchanging law of nature is still with us. It is the spirit of the old woman in the story who, on being asked whether she had ever ridden in an airplane, replied: "No, and I don't intend to. I stick to railroads, the way the good Lord intended for His creatures to ride."

Where to draw the line on subjects for class discussion is not easy to decide.<sup>1</sup> Since we are likely to err

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 274ff.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

wherever we place it, in perhaps most instances it might be better to let our error incline to the side of greater freedom. Experience will teach our youth how much or how little of their Utopias can be built into the actualities in their lifetime. But age is much less likely to create that passion for remaking for which we must look chiefly to our young. Age will discipline and enlighten social enthusiasms. It is much less likely to generate them. For the latter purpose we must count on the inspirations drawn in youth from high-minded, outspoken teachers.

Instructors with advanced views are hardly likely to constitute the majority. They need all support. They can count on the fact that most of our communities already have a certain will to be just. That these will also catch up to the need of more intelligence upon this matter of academic freedom is neither sure nor hopeless. The work of accelerating such intelligence is, as always where a better public opinion needs to be shaped, the business of the minority who are already aroused. If it is not an easy task, this means only that it is not exempt from the difficulties which all great movements encounter in their beginnings. Small groups who, unlike the visionaries, are clear-visioned enough to see that advancement can neither be rammed down people's throats nor achieved overnight by oratory, can exercise an influence out of all proportion to their size. The work of supporting them must surely continue to appeal to people of public spirit.

## CHAPTER VII

### RELIGION

O human soul! as long as thou canst so  
Set up a mark of everlasting light,  
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,  
To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—  
Not with lost toil thou laborest in the night!  
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THERE are people who hold that ideals can never be taught effectively until our schools and homes turn from their "godlessness" and teach religion. The sentiment in favor of such instruction seems to be growing. People are alarmed at the increase in criminality. In some states the teaching of religion is now a part of the compulsory practice of the public schools. Members of many denominations want to see a part of every school-week set aside for religion, the Catholic children going to the priests, the Protestant children to their ministers, the Jewish to rabbis, the instruction being given either in school time, or after a school day shortened for this purpose.

The value of an earnest, intelligent, religious upbringing few can doubt. Men and women to whom there is real meaning in the words, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it," are likely to take their responsibilities more seriously than those who never give thought to first and last things. Vast multitudes of respectable persons seem utterly content with the merest of hand-to-mouth, sporadic idealisms, if any.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Others are frivolous, cocky, grasping. If such people can be kindled to better life only by religion, it would plainly be our business to welcome such a contribution heartily. Search deeply enough, and at the roots of every high-grade character we shall find reverences and moral enthusiasms.

In *Sartor Resartus*, Thomas Carlyle, whose tribute to his father was quoted in an earlier chapter, said this of his mother:

The highest whom I knew on Earth I saw bowed down, with awe unspeakable, before a Higher in Heaven: such things, especially in infancy, reach inwards to the very core of your being; mysteriously does a Holy of Holies build itself into visibility in the mysterious deeps; and Reverence, the divinest in man, springs forth undying from its mean envelopment of Fear.

The best that any religion can offer people is the incentive to noble relationships with one another. In the words of Felix Adler:

The world will be redeemed, the better day will come, when each one shall see his fellows as the disciples saw their Master—a ray of that light which never was on sea or land penetrating the outward semblance, and the beheld and the beholder transfigured jointly, each in the other's radiance.

The duty of religion and morality now and forever is to see that the outside, the mask-wearing side of us human beings, is not confused with and does not replace the inner, the spiritual self of man. There is in every human being a vital spiritual force, which makes man different from the common animal and the other elements of existence.

It is only because often we are blind to the spiritual side of the other person and judge him only by the exterior mask that we have so many evil forces in human relations. It is blindness that causes us to see only the ugly, superficial things in others. But religion provides the sharp eyes to see the fine spiritual side of human beings by saying, "Come ye all who suffer from blindness, and I will teach you to see."

## RELIGION

Ideally, it would therefore be excellent to have at least the history of religion taught everywhere. Culture alone would require a knowledge of the part that the religions of man have played in molding the world's life. This belongs to general history. The lives of religious founders, saints, heroes; the sayings, parables, songs, buildings, statues, paintings, plays, festivals, which religions have inspired; and, not least, their effects upon the daily lives of the believers, are too important a heritage to be slighted.

## DANGERS

But there are many good reasons for going slowly about connecting religion with the nation's public schools. In the home each family can pass on those beliefs it holds precious. There indeed, howsoever the parents may wish to be relieved of the need, the children must be taught some religion or other, by whatever name it be called. To let them choose for themselves when they are grown up is to dodge the realities. The parents may have scruples against passing on their own ideas, but other people whose beliefs may be worse are eager enough to capture the young minds. The surest way to respect the freedom of the young is to put at their disposal—without coercion—the best that we ourselves have found.

But though this is an inescapable obligation of the home, the use of the public school to teach religion, either directly or by giving up a portion of its day to the religious agencies, raises another problem.

Not all in every community are agreed that religious education is so sure a help. The warden of Sing Sing prison, New York, in his report for the fiscal year ending

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

June 30, 1926, says that of 1,452 prisoners during that year, 1,445, or 99.4 per cent, professed membership in a religious denomination. Plainly, it is not the religious teaching in itself but its ethical quality that means most. Moreover, children from the "godless" public schools show up in their conduct at least as well as those from the parochial schools. High as the benefits of a religious education undoubtedly are for many persons, communities are not unwise in being cautious about committing tax-supported schools to any program that insists that "religion" benefits all.

Besides, it may well be asked why any assistance from the schools is rightly demanded. What parents really want for their children, they take the trouble to provide. Religious training is in this respect no different from the good clothes or the technical training or the dancing partners that parents believe essential. If parents genuinely want religious training for their children, there is no law to keep them from sending their children to the Sabbath schools and from seeing that they attend. Can it be that they wish the schools to exercise a compulsion that they themselves are powerless to offer? It may even be that the parents are indifferent and that where a demand is made for help from the schools, it represents only a minority.

In some quarters it is also to be feared that more harm than good will be done by separating the children on lines of sect. The hurt lies in reviving more or less quiescent antagonisms.<sup>1</sup> The problem of adjusting all

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<sup>1</sup> When it is proposed, for example, that the schools simply stress belief in God, the objection is raised that this "non-creedal" religion means Unitarianism and is therefore unsatisfying to other groups, whose to whom a "religion" without belief in the Trinity is no religion at all.

## RELIGION

the claims of the many different sects is none too easy; and the sectarian zeal of many of the types who are eager for religious instruction warns us how likely it is that in more than one community, sectarian quarrels will be intensified when the project is started. Such exhibitions of heat as have already come from certain intolerant groups in America tell us that the atmosphere in which the claims of the many different beliefs must be considered will not always be serene, judicial, and broad-minded. At present in some states a rather perfunctory religious teaching is offered in the few minutes of Bible reading with which the school assembly opens. It is more or less non-sectarian; and anybody who has listened to the average school principal mumble the morning reading will appreciate how little it amounts to, one way or another. But once an energetic teaching on a larger scale is started in state schools, the zealots in the different camps may make us wish that we had not stirred into sharper consciousness those unfortunate bigotries that still accompany too many beliefs.

What is done outside of school hours and without asking the teachers in the public system to enforce attendance is quite another matter. So is the action of communities that can agree whole-heartedly upon a common program. The danger to be avoided is sectarian bigotry. Left to themselves children are as innocent of religious antipathies as they are of racial or national. They are quite ready to play in all heartiness with children from homes unlike their own. It is when they hear words of contempt from their elders that they themselves show the same deplorable alienation. Not a few have learned in this fashion to be intolerant.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### TOLERATION AND APPRECIATION

Teachers themselves are not always free from the malady. A public-school principal was asked what provision for religious instruction would be made for a child whose parents declared themselves Freethinkers or affiliated with no church whatever. She replied in a burst of feeling, "Only a wicked man would wish to keep his child out of church." She probably thought herself tolerant because she was willing to let other faiths than her own be taught. Many of her coworkers throughout America are unable to understand beliefs different from their own. When Pompey the Great was campaigning in Asia, he visited Jerusalem and entered the temple. Accustomed as he was to see in Rome many images of gods, he was at once struck by the fact that here there was not a single image to be observed. He was shocked and called the Jews atheists. Little did he know of the people who had already given the world Micah and Isaiah, and were soon to give it Jesus, a people whose conception of God was so exalted that they counted it profanation to employ any image whatever.

Luckily there are many schools in America where the teachers are doing their part to offset the poorer ideas. A New York fifth grade in which there were very few Catholics, became so interested in St. Francis of Assisi that it spent days making "stained glass windows" illustrating the life of the saint. In California, one history class, composed almost entirely of Protestant children, was studying the early history of its state. As the missions play an important part in this story, much time was spent in learning about their growth. The children became hugely interested in the padres. They admired

## RELIGION

the steadfastness and unselfish devotion of these men, quite as people of all beliefs can admire the two priests in Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

Here is a project conducted in an Eastern state where, again, the social studies were used to teach religious tolerance:<sup>1</sup>

One class was a group of dull and rough boys. Before teaching this unit the teacher experienced difficulty in interesting the boys and in controlling their disorderly conduct. They became interested in toleration. They discussed frankly the clashes that occurred among the Catholics, the Jews, and the Protestants of their own group. As the study proceeded, there was marked improvement in the behavior of the most disorderly boys. There was also a change in their attitude toward one another. Fights and the calling of hard names decreased. This class built a historical frieze representing a period of time from 2000 B.C. to 2000 A.D. The frieze shows the development of the idea of religious tolerance.

Tolerance, however, is not enough. It means either putting up with something objectionable that we cannot remove, or else good-naturedly indulging what does not particularly concern ourselves. In either event, the tolerant imagine themselves to be the superior folk. What all need is something far better even than toleration, namely, appreciation, respect for good things other than our own. There is a story that the owner of an aboriginal Ford car once asked another man what kind of car he drove. On receiving the reply, "I drive a Packard," he answered, "That's a good car, too." Not so very unlike the toleration with which many people satisfy themselves.

The least we can do is to keep children from the idea that the other person holds to his religion for reasons

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Report of Superintendent, Cleveland Schools, 1926.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

inferior to their own. More positively, it is essential to look for what is excellent in the unlike. "Light is good," said the Persian sage Abdu'l Baha, "in whatsoever lamp it is burning. A rose is beautiful in whatsoever garden it may bloom. A star has the same radiance whether it shines from the East or the West." Surely it is possible at the same time to be quite loyal to one's group and wherever there is true worth in others, "to prize it as if it were our own."

Again, this is what a modern-minded religious teaching might ideally be expected to encourage. Communities where teachers are ready to act in some such spirit as this may go ahead more confidently. In some the religious teaching is commanding itself to all the community. In others, however, separating the children for religious instruction during the school hours, or asking the teachers to check up on instruction after hours, is likely to bring results either dubious or assuredly bad.

### WHAT CHURCHES CAN DO

The churches and temples can do much without sending their teachers into the schools and without asking for school time. Indeed, there is danger that in getting more chance to teach religion, many may think that the chief moral problem of the schools has been solved. There is a great deal more to be done, and here the churches can be of decided help.

They can influence the idealism of the children through making better men and women of the children's teachers. The churches say that the "godless" school is a moral failure. If this is true, there can be no stronger indictment of the churches themselves. In some schools the

## RELIGION

majority of the children's teachers are good churchgoers. Yet it would seem that religious idealism means so little in the lives of these people that their pupils have caught nothing of it from them. Enthusiasms spread by contagion. Nothing so kindles moral passion as the living contact with people who are themselves aflame. Fortunately for our boys and girls there are many such teachers in the public schools. Are all or most of the churchgoers among the teachers such persons? What the churches can do is to keep fresh the currents of ethical inspiration in the teachers.

The churches can also put their power into getting better schools. One reason why the product of many schools is poor is the fact that the teachers labor under needless handicaps. They have classes of forty, sometimes fifty, children in a single room. In New York, there are part-time sessions: the richest city in the entire world has not yet provided a full day's schooling and a seat for every child. The buildings that some cities are still obliged to use are old-fashioned structures fit for wrecking twenty-five years ago. Machinelike methods are forced on too many schools because otherwise the thousands of children jamming the building would give the teachers more trouble. In one of the public kindergartens, when the teacher took down the window-pole to open the window, a tot who had come to school for the first time that day, did what every healthy, normal child would do—she turned her head to watch what the teacher was going to do with that interesting pole. Instantly the teacher snapped, "Sit still!" Undoubtedly the better superintendents and the principals in our schools do not at all want that kind of so-called teaching. It is now utterly outmoded; and this kinder-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

gartner must have known so. She had probably begun her work with the usual enthusiastic hopes, and had been turned into this drillmaster by the steady pressure of the big classes and the push for factorylike efficiency. The churches stand for the supremacy of the spiritual motive. Let them wake up their communities to the need of keeping the souls of the teachers alive.

Devoted men and women there are in the public schools who do succeed, despite all the obstacles, in putting the breath of life into their teaching. But the many private or public experimental schools in America remind us how far the public system as a whole must still go to catch up. Aside from serving those parents who want the best available for their children, such experimental schools are necessary to dramatize for people what can and should be offered to every boy and girl in the land. Most people are content with what is done in the average or subaverage public schools because they have never seen for themselves anything better. They object to paying further taxes, because they have not the imagination to see where the schools can be improved. They need to have the better things put right before their eyes. *Until every child in this country gets an education as excellent as the best provided now in the best experimental schools, let us not boast of our democratic education.* Let us rather be ashamed that the richest country in the world has not found the money yet to spend on more and better schools. There are still communities where the teachers have not had the two years' preparation that the law requires of a dentist before he pulls our teeth or of a lawyer to keep us out of jail. In some country districts the lack of professional training is even more of a disgrace, for there are teachers

## RELIGION

who themselves have not gone beyond the ninth grade.<sup>1</sup>

The churches want better manhood and womanhood for America. They can put their energies into bringing home to the public conscience that no dollar is really saved if it is saved at the cost of a child's schooling. Making souls is incomparably more important than saving money.

So one might cite similar needs in the homes. There are alleged homes where children are exposed to all sorts of physical and moral filth. Talk about developing the higher life in children seems almost a mockery in the face of these disgraces. Let the churches stir their members to abolish them. All these things they can do in the interests of the children without bringing specific religious instruction into the public schools. Let them arouse the teachers, inspire the parents, wake up our citizenship to truer conceptions of civic responsibility.

### ETHICAL ROOTS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

The value of any religious teaching whatever is ultimately a matter of its ethical depth and soundness. There are noble conceptions of God, and there are ignoble ones. The better a man's moral training, the grander, if he is religious at all, will be his religion. If at heart his ethical ideals are mean and poverty-stricken, his religion will do no more than make these mean and poverty-stricken ideals more intense and hurtful, as it does for those people to-day to whom religion is but a bigoted hunting down of practices that they happen to dislike.

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<sup>1</sup> See "State Laws and Regulations Governing Teachers' Certificates," *Bulletin No. 19, 1927*, Bureau of Education, Government Printing Office, especially p. 14 on the fifteen states with the lowest minimum prerequisites. For progress here, see *Bulletin No. 16, 1930*, Ch. xiii.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

A religion is as good or as bad as the ethics out of which it springs. "You must be pure before you can believe in purity," said Frederick W. Robertson, "generous before you can believe in unselfishness. What you are is the condition of your belief." This is why to the saint, religion means saintliness, and to a moneybags, divine sanction for his sharp teeth and claws. The soldier does not pray for a heart to forgive his enemy, he prays for victory. When men pray sincerely, they pray to get such things and to become such persons as their ethical training and their ethical instruction permit them to conceive as ideal. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."

Therefore let the public schools cultivate, among other essentials, the love of the brother. Let them, that is, develop the moral aptitudes that people of all sects and beliefs can more readily unite in honoring. Although the Catholic is marked off from the Protestant, the Jew, and the Freethinker by his religious beliefs, there are moral practices that all honorable men and women, much as they may differ in religion, are alike in respecting. Upright, conscientious, high-minded, truth-loving doers of justice and mercy are found not in one religious group alone but in all. Their practices and ideals can be taught without setting up the dividing lines of theological belief. It is these that deserve first place in schools dedicated to making our democracy a unity.

With the love for the brother on earth taught in the schools, let the home, if it is so minded, carry the child on to the love of the Heavenly Father. One way is to have the children begin by helping the needy. As they grow older, let them help those who are treated unjustly. The next step is to understand and to help the people

## RELIGION

who are themselves unjust. Only when a truly religious person feels the hurt that a wrongdoer is inflicting on his own higher nature can he understand something of the love that is felt by the Father of all. Let the churches give their special religious interpretations to these moral experiences. But the experiences come first in order of time. They are first in importance. Whether or not we then come to love the Father in heaven, the first essential is to learn to love the brother on earth and to act toward him as a brother should.

So of the other ideals that inspire the good life. They are the monopoly of no religious body. They are universal. They lay the best foundation for whatever beliefs about man's destiny the various groups may cherish. The better the conduct, the truer and richer will be the religious insights.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wherever people labor reverently, they are aware of something transcendent that is trying to express itself through their efforts. Spanning the centuries, past, present and to be, there is a highest life in which participate all men and women at their best, which cannot be defeated permanently by the defeats of to-day and to-morrow, a life that can never be completely incarnated, but in the striving toward which our own lives are greatened—just as a lover, unable to win his beloved, is yet, because of her, lifted out of himself and made into the truer man.

Members of Ethical Culture Societies call their fellowships religious because, indispensable as it is to live upright lives, be kind neighbors, just and public-spirited citizens, they are haunted by the sense that no matter what rare excellence any persons or a whole world may reach, a loftier goodness still calls from beyond, always giving us the best of reasons to take seriously our sojourn upon this planet. It is in this sense that there is something superlative and real which rightly claims our energies that the Ethical Culture Societies speak of themselves as religious, even though they have put by the beliefs usually associated with that name. They understand by the word religious, being deeply in earnest about realities of the first importance in the whole order of being.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### TOUCHING THE FEELINGS

The point of chief importance is that in the experiences of the growing moral life are to be found the most productive approaches to a life of developing religious experience. The ultimate proof is the moral quality of the fruitage. "It is not the oath that makes us believe the man, but the man the oath."

Right practice must come first, last, and always. But it must constantly be interpreted and led on to still finer outcomes. Reflection on moral principles must be encouraged and enlightened. Fundamental contributions handed on to the present from the past not to Europe or America alone but to the human race as a whole, must be appreciated. Here is a signal opportunity to bring home something of the thought repeated in these pages, that overarching the lives of individuals and generations, there is a best life for all the race. The school turns to the past in order that the present may make its better contribution, if it can, to the future, so that the ages ahead may in their turn serve the Highest more ably. Through inspiring biography, vivid history-teaching, pageants, festivals, dramatic celebrations of lofty moments in the life of the race, children can be made to feel some sense of linkage between their own lives and lives past and to come, and something of the conviction that "life is good to the extent that it is given to good causes."

Festivals offer a rich opportunity. Every year in some cities there are parents of children in the public schools who protest that the children are required to sing songs or engage in Christmas celebrations that are decidedly sectarian. Sometimes these protests are ignored; at other

## RELIGION

times, in order to remain neutral, the public school has no celebration whatever.

And all the while there is excellent chance to use this seasonal celebration for ideals that are entirely non-sectarian and universally important. The spirit of good will is not confined to any one religious body. It belongs to all men and women everywhere. In the ancient days, long before Christmas received its Christian interpretation, men celebrated the fact that now the days began to grow longer and more and more light and warmth came from the sun. Outside in nature, there was cold. But human beings had learned to make fires. And howsoever cold the outer world might be, human beings could warm one another's heart by acts of good will.

Here is an idea that is still important for children who belong to homes of any and every religion. It is in this spirit that the Ethical Culture Schools every year celebrate a Winter Festival. One year the children dramatized scenes showing how man through the ages had hailed this return of the sun, and in what different ways man learned to give his world light and warmth. With effective help from the electrician, one class began the program with a dance pageant symbolizing the gift of light from the heavenly bodies. A younger group then dramatized scenes from the life of the Cave Man before fire was known and after. Another class portrayed Egyptian sun worship.

The second part of the festival dramatized ways in which spiritual light broke upon mankind. One such scene represented a blacksmith beating a bundle of swords upon an anvil. As the blacksmith struck with his hammer, a pupil slowly spoke the words from Isaiah: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

their spears into pruning hooks...." When the festival was ended, many a parent spoke of feeling a peculiar lump in his throat or even a suspicious moisture in his eyes. The sincerity of the festival and the moving appeal of its central idea were felt by everybody who was there.

Gratitude, reverence, hero worship, joy in the triumph of exalted principles, may all be fed through some such means as these. Every subject or skill taught in the day school has its inspiring tradition. Literature and the other arts should be pressed into service to permit the children to identify themselves vicariously with the best moments of living that the race has known or can hope. History will mean most when it is treated as a record of how the human race as a whole has attempted certain great collective and uncompleted tasks. It has struggled up from the brute life to an existence more deserving of the name human. But it is not by any means fully human yet. Here is a task for all mankind together. The need for it has never been more urgent than in this age of disruptive nationalisms, egotistic racial prides, and class strife. History-teaching can breathe life into this requirement. It should interpret the task of mankind in terms of a moral struggle, often defeated, partially successful—and even then at bitter cost—and unending in its noble possibilities. It should try to move the pupils to feel the shame of the great failures, that is, those instances where the excellence in man has been outraged (as in wars of conquest, persecution, slavery, and so on). Let it make them feel the joy of those moments when the great business of the race was advanced; and especially let it help to quicken the eager, but always (in contrast with fanaticism or with merely

## RELIGION

impulsive, unappreciative revolt) the thoughtful and informed desire to push the unfinished task still further ahead.<sup>1</sup>

### THE VISION OF THE HIGHEST

Religious education is thus both dependent upon ethical living and, purged of the sins that have stained the past, contributory to such living. People understand the meaning of life's best to the degree that they try to live it out; and when such practice is tempted to halt, it needs to be reanimated by the high vision.

The sense of an ideal best, always beyond the highest men ever succeed in attaining, is constantly required. We have our glimpses of a complete perfection latent in people but never fully expressed. We press forward in that direction; and then we behold how far off the best life still is. The ideal life for the race is always mocked by the actual, even when the latter does its utmost to reach the higher levels. But the living sense of these boundless altitudes toward which to aspire floods our spiritual strivings with renewed energy.

The good life thus conceived is far from being an easy matter. To believe in a grand goal for all who walk the earth, to lift our actual daily lives up to the standards we profess, and to labor to bring our times into line with the lofty demands of a thoroughgoing moral progress is no slight task in the face of our common inertia, our self-contentment, our fears, or our unwillingness to do the drudgery or brave the hostility necessitated by many

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<sup>1</sup> Many teachers are already doing this without any explicit religious reference. Ways in which science, literature, history, all the other interests, may be taught "to the glory of God," will be discussed in Part III.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

a forward-looking step. A motive power to put fresh spirit into these efforts is needed; and any belief that supplies such incentives deserves, even from those who do not share it, full honor. "By their fruits . . ."

PART II  
WHERE PSYCHOLOGY CAN HELP



## CHAPTER VIII

### MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

Turn all thy passions into the right channel and make them holy; this is the true cure; the bare restraint of them is but a palliate.

RICHARD BAXTER

It is what is fixed in early childhood that determines what an individual is capable of reacting to as an adolescent or adult. War, burlesque shows, pornography, literature, wit—all these, all things in the world, are created by man's needs and accepted according to his needs for emotional food. . . . I question whether as time goes on we shall spend as much time fighting evils as we do now. These things cannot touch an individual except as he needs them, and if he needs them, he will find them, if not directly, then indirectly. Our attention will be rather to the early years, to discovering what creates needs for things which we disapprove or consider good—not to keeping away temptations, but to creating men and women for whom they have no meaning.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE NEW HOPE

IN morals, as in other achievement, there are high-grades, low-, and in-between. Time was when the low-grades were deemed incurable and capable of responding to only one kind of treatment—the lash. To-day our judgment is not quite so final; and from the saner treatment of the worst transgressors, we are learning much that is useful all along the line upward.

Much if not most juvenile misconduct is curable. A statement like this need no longer be regarded as only

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<sup>1</sup> Frankwood Williams, in an address at the International Congress for Mental Hygiene, Washington, 1930.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

a pious wish. It is true that many types of delinquency still lie beyond the reach of treatment. There are cases which baffle the skill of the ablest experts to diagnose or for which the necessary treatment is not available. But if any fact is clear for those with eyes to see, it is that if we start early enough, most kinds of twisted life can be set straight and many a defect prevented.

A recent study made possible by the Judge Baker Foundation of Boston amply confirms this assurance.<sup>1</sup> For nine years a group of experts studied how certain problem children had been affected by care in foster homes. These 501 youthful delinquents had been guilty of such offenses as truancy, theft, pathologic lying, begging, sex transgressions, drinking, excessive smoking, lighting fires. Some were in more than one respect highly abnormal and had committed more than one type of misdeed. Convinced that these boys and girls could not be cured by treatment in institutions, the experts had had them placed in foster homes, some as boarders, some as adopted children, others as employees. One hundred and sixty-two had been thus placed by public officials, and 339 by private social or religious groups. It was the latter on whom the study was made because public care still lags behind the better sort of private agencies in personal attention to placement and in continued supervision.

Out of the study of what this wiser solicitude can do, these results stand out: Of the 217 cases classed as normal, no less than 90 per cent were found to have been remade by their years in the good foster homes. Of the

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<sup>1</sup> William Healy, Augusta F. Bronner, Edith M. H. Baylor, and J. Prentice Murphy, *Reconstructing Behavior in Youth* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1929).

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

20 cases of defective mentality, 70 per cent were recovered; and of the one hundred and two abnormals, 45 per cent. Of the failures, it is quite possible that some might have benefited from care in better homes than those available or chosen; some perhaps were beyond the reach of any help known to us now. But it is abundantly plain from the large percentage of successes that, even where grave defects have already begun to appear, a better home environment can change conduct for the better. The weak can be strengthened, the morally or mentally sick can be cured. Who can say what a wiser and a better parenthood may not yet accomplish?

### A NEW STUDY FOR TEACHERS

The beginnings must be made early and intelligently. Light on the special need for this approach is shed by another study, conducted in the public schools of two large cities, and reported in *Children's Behaviors and Teachers' Attitudes*, by E. K. Wickman.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this investigation was to see how teachers and others rated children's misbehaviors. Asked to list what they considered undesirable forms of conduct, the teachers specified, with very few exceptions, active disturbances of various kinds and violations of the accepted moral code. "Of first importance were the problems of immorality, dishonesty, and transgressions against authority; second . . . were the problems of disorderliness in the classroom and lack of application to school tasks; third . . . were the extravagant, aggressive personality traits; while the least . . . were the withdrawing, recessive . . . traits" (p. 154). Social and emotional malad-

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Fund, New York.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

justments that are not directly disturbing to school routine, such as shyness, dependence, negativism, were conspicuously few in this listing.

The conclusions of the teachers were then submitted to thirty experts in child guidance clinics with a request for judgment on their part. These people, who were freer to take an objective attitude than the teachers annoyed by the offenses, and who were especially trained in mental hygiene, looked at the problems in a very different light.

Some of the problems considered serious by the teachers were also regarded as fairly serious by the clinicians. Of this group two problems only, cruelty and temper tantrums, were assigned about the same degree and position of seriousness by the clinicians as by the teachers. . . . But whereas teachers considered shyness, sensitiveness, unsocialness, fearfulness, dreaminess among the *least* serious of all problems, the clinicians ranked them together with unhappiness, depression and easily discouraged, resentful, physical coward, suggestible, and over-critical, at the very top of the list as the most serious. These items in the mental hygienists' ratings completely replaced the problems . . . which the teachers ranked as most serious. (p. 126.)

The point is not that the requirements of the school are unimportant. Breaking rules can be a very grave matter. The study indicates rather how other needs of equal or greater gravity can be quite overlooked. Quick to note the behaviors that may point to future burglary by the child, teachers are blind to those that may work out into other ways of wrecking a life. The conduct rated as serious by the clinicians may point to future insanity or suicide. Before constructive methods can be applied therefore to *all* behavior problems, it is evident that there is vast need for a new education of our teachers themselves.

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

Here certain cautions must be sounded. Much as the new study of the mind has to offer, experienced folk are on their guard against tales of magic restoration wrought because of this or that psychologic way of handling a child. For many persons to-day there is a kind of magic about the word psychology. But we must remember in the first place that no psychologic treatment is effective without a loving sympathy on the part of those who offer it. Read the case studies in the pages that follow and observe how important is the attitude of the case worker, what endless patience is required, what willingness to delve into ugly realities, what unselfish desire to restore the maladjusted. Have all teachers or case workers such gifts? The best of psychologic help may fail when offered by persons without a warm human interest in their charges.

In the second place, though our knowledge in this field has greatly increased, we still have much to learn. The applications are far from being as exact and unfailing as some enthusiasms would suggest. No one school of psychology has the last word on the subject. Thirty years ago the great name in psychology was that of William James. Since then other schools have appeared. Each has added something to our knowledge; we are learning much, for example, about the buried emotional life; but the psychology of character development is still in many directions very much in need of light.

Third, no little harm can be done by the inexpert. There are cases that need the trained psychiatrist or physician. For example, a mental hygienist calls attention to the need to distinguish three kinds of act which are commonly confused, namely, habit, craving, and com-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

pulsion.<sup>1</sup> A craving, as for cigarettes, is not a true habit like swimming. It is marked by a pleasure-pain element and is not corrected by simple abstinence. Correction requires siege methods rather than the direct assault that most parents or teachers are likely to make. A compulsion, like kleptomania or gambling, differs from a habit and a craving both. It cannot be broken off gradually as a craving can. The trouble lies somewhere in the unconscious where there is a constant generation of an energy in need of other outlet. But it is only the expert who can understand a case of this kind and prescribe treatment.

A further warning. The new psychology, especially the Freudian, has been interested in the main in the study of the hurtfully abnormal behaviors. Hence there is a tendency for some students to lose their balance completely and to see "abnormality" everywhere. The closest studies have thus far been made of individuals who became criminals or psychopaths. Out of their careers, students have read backwards into the childhood of such persons and found what they consider signs pointing to the future evil. It does not necessarily follow, however, that all persons who show these tendencies in their childhood become problems later on. Not every boy who teases a cat or pulls his sister's hair is going to turn out a degenerate. A cool head, a genuinely scientific detachment, and sense of proportion will save parents and teachers from many a needless worry or blunder.

Nor does it follow that the new psychology requires one to look upon conscience, self-control, morality as now hopelessly old-fashioned. This fallacy was easy enough in the first enthusiastic misreading of the Freud-

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<sup>1</sup> G. J. Estabrooks in *Mental Hygiene Bulletin*, September, 1928.

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

ian teachings. No reputable psychiatrist teaches surrender to impulse. The need for self-direction is as real as it ever was. What the new doctrines are doing is to help make such self-control more intelligent.

With these cautions in mind, we may consider the following cases of modern mental-hygiene treatment of young children.

### UNINTELLIGENT PARENTS

Arnold, nine years old, was of good average mentality, well developed physically but somewhat anemic. The chief trouble was his parents. His father, of foreign birth, a shrewd and successful merchant, known to be unscrupulous in business, was crudely arrogant. He referred to himself as temperamental and nervous. The mother was obese, slovenly, and apathetic. Because of some illness, her intelligence was decidedly below par. She bore two other children, a boy, now five, undersized and very precocious, and a girl, almost three, healthy, attractive and apparently normal.

Arnold was reported to the psychologist by the father as utterly unmanageable at home and in school, disobedient, unreliable, unclean, troublesome in the neighborhood, sexually precocious. Investigation in the home revealed that discipline there was limited to sporadic slaps, screams and scoldings, following a child's offense, and inflicted by the mother, the maid, or a visiting relative. These were occasionally supplemented by solemn commandment and lectures from the father.

The mother displayed obvious partiality to the two younger children. And Arnold complained of being unloved by both parents. He said that often he consciously entertained thoughts of revenge. Although the home

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

was equipped in comfort, little privacy was maintained for the boy. He complained that he could never hide anything from the two younger children, that they made free with all his property, including school supplies.

His principal and teacher complained that Arnold was untidy in clothes and in the care of his school things, inattentive and slack.

The following points were therefore brought home to the parents in many conferences. They were urged to understand the child better, to be fair and consistent in their discipline, to respect his desire for privacy and control over his own property, to interest themselves in sharing his recreations, to provide companionship with other children of his age, and especially not to show favoritism. To bolster up the low confidence of the mother, it was necessary to explain to her that her apparent failure as housekeeper and mother was due to her physical condition. She was induced to receive competent medical care. Corporal punishment was forbidden for Arnold; and the relatives were ordered to withhold their assistance in disciplining. Arnold was placed upon his own responsibility for rising in the morning, for getting to school on time, and completing his homework. This was to be achieved through several intimate talks between him and the psychologist, and through the presentation of a watch as his own entirely personal property. The parents were urged to take the new régime as seriously as Arnold and to keep the younger children from interfering with him when he did his homework.

The room that he shares with his brother was carefully subdivided. Arnold was urged to help introduce a few simple improvements, shelves for supplies, racks for ties, and so on. The psychologist planned for after-

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

school outdoor play, for joining an arts and crafts club, and for reading in the evening. These were substituted for an almost daily attendance at the movies. The parents were also urged to take the children on outings to places of interest.

Constructive play material was introduced into the home for all these children. The youngest was enrolled in a nursery school in order to get a further wholesome contact for the home. To help Arnold take more interest in his classwork and personal appearance, the teacher has arranged for frequent appearances in the auditorium for him, provided his work is good and his appearance is neat. Marked improvement has resulted.

After the first month's work, the father was so interested that he sent the psychologist almost daily reports of how well things were going. The regeneration was by no means complete. For a home so unenlightened in matters of child training, years of expert supervision are required to achieve lasting changes.

### OVERANXIOUS MOTHER

Alfred's father was a kindly, affectionate, weak-willed man, whose intentions were of the best but who found it impossible to resist temptation. When Alfred was a mere baby, the father became a fugitive from justice so that the boy never knew him except to hear of him as a family disgrace.

He very closely resembled the father, however, so that the mother in her intense love for her boy was daily living over her early love for her husband and at the same time agonizing lest the resemblance should also extend to mind and character. He had his father's good qualities, but he was also weak-willed. Was this because

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

his father had been so or because he was only a little child? Was he more weak-willed than the ordinary boy of six, or seven, or eight, or nine? This was the question that the mother was always asking herself and answering in terrified or obstinate affirmatives and negatives. If any fault was pointed out in the child, she was unnecessarily quick in his defense. If he did anything wrong, her blame was disproportionate.

His I.Q. was 115 in grade six (when he came to us), and 111 in grade seven. He was not a strong student. He was eager to please his mother. But temptations to cheat were very great. Although he was overindulged in many ways by various relations, there was not a great deal of money for treats and toys. There were several situations where a toy was suddenly acquired under suspicious conditions, where ice cream treats could not be accounted for, and the like.

His teachers spent many hours, amounting to whole days, in unraveling such situations, endeavoring to do so by winning his confidence and yet at the same time making him feel that although he himself was a dear boy and loved by them, the thing that he seemed to have done was mean or cowardly or dishonest. This would not have been so difficult had it not then become necessary to be present at the first meeting of mother and son—to inspire the boy with courage and to enable the mother to strike the balance between being genuinely shocked and grieved, and yet not reproachful or discouraged for the future.

One does not completely solve problems of this sort. Alfred did not become the strongest and most courageous of personalities. But he went through his high school life with the good qualities fairly dominant; and very

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

few pupils realized the difficulties that had made the elementary years so critical.

### STEADIED BY VOCATIONAL AMBITION

Anthony entered our grade six when nearly twelve. He was so poorly prepared that, after much tutoring in fundamentals, it was decided to have him repeat the grade. During this year of repetition his I.Q. was found to be 118; in grade seven it was 113, in a class with a median I.Q. of 130. He soon became proficient in English and in the records of grade seven we find comment of special excellence in composition—beauty of sentence and evidence of real style. In mathematics he was very poor; but much tutoring secured average results in grades six, seven, and eight, first half. In geography and history he was very uneven, now failing, now excellent. In art always “good”; “visualizes problems”; “loves color”; “great energy”; “good imagination”; “willing to give time for extra work”; grade seven, “superior achievement.”

From character cards we glean the following phrases: again and again “temperamental”; “eager but not sustained”; “affectionate and helpful”; “irritable, bossy, and tattling”; “handsome, charming, with winning smile”; “always attractive even at his worst”; “easy-going and irresponsible”; in shop work, “heedless.” After grades seven and eight, it was noted that he was very popular with boys, who looked blank when he could not play with them.

But his heedlessness and irresponsibility elsewhere were so marked and made work with him so difficult in all situations that his mother was summoned for a long conference while he was in grade seven. Her explana-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

tion seemed very reasonable. A younger brother had been crippled in an accident, and Anthony had shown for him, almost from his infancy, a responsibility and tender solicitude. By the time we knew him, he was doing a great deal of actual nursing of this brother and was unfailing in his cheer—relating incidents, helping with school work, never forgetting to bring the promised pencil or book or toy. His mother felt that his heedlessness in school was not an evidence of childish withdrawal from sad realities but a relaxation for taut nerves. There was also at times great irritation with other boys whom he saw strong while his brother was so weak.

Anthony's eighth grade was successful. There were many B and B+ marks. In English there was especially favorable comment. Art was good and there were several A's in French. The next three years were very hard. Latin, difficult from the first, was soon a lamentable failure. Mathematics settled into hopeless confusion. Art was his only delight, always good but not superior. In athletics he showed an eager interest but was not successful because fearful, fumbling, and hesitant. He was terribly afraid of criticism and unduly discouraged by it, though never resentful.

During this hard period the family was gradually forced to accept the fact that the brother would never be any better. The mother had several long, critical illnesses. Anthony's mornings and evenings were given to incessant care of the brother. He was his mother's constant cheer and comfort. He often went home after school to wash the breakfast dishes and make the family beds. Finances were low. Most of the time the father was away from home; and his infrequent and brief visits were periods of intense anxiety and sorrow. He "took

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

it out" in reproaching Anthony for failing in Latin and mathematics and insisted upon college. The boy's inner life was a tragic, groping confusion, while at the same time he was often reprimanded for kiddish playfulness in class. He was upheld by the steadfast understanding and confidence of one teacher whose faith in him he was always striving, albeit haltingly, to justify. Through her instrumentality a desk was provided for him at home in a corner of a quiet room so that he could study away from the family hubbub. Probably her greatest help was in interpreting him to his teachers and to his father. Such temperaments require a great deal of interpretation.

During the last year Anthony has suddenly come to his own. Latin and mathematics have been dropped and the father has abandoned all idea of college. The boy enjoys all the art work, and all the academic which seems to him *practically* related to art. He regrets that it is his last year of school and longs to go on studying—the *subjects related to his work*. His English this year has not seemed to him to have any such bearing. He declares shame-facedly that he has worked hard, but—there is no value in it for him. (Teacher declares him careless and marks him C—.)

His chosen field is landscape-gardening. He did some work last summer as an apprentice. Chemistry and biology now have a new meaning for him. He is demonstrating marked ability, the science teachers declaring him to be one of their most original and progressive students. He was very indignant when a recent faculty meeting cut out one of these science periods. "What right has the school to deprive us of one of these periods when the year is so short?"

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### EARLY TERRORS

Denys (I.Q. 126) was born in Paris three years before the summer of 1914. His earliest recollections were associated with the air raids. When he came to us, aged about twelve, he would turn visibly pale and show every sign of terror at the sound of a loud automobile in the street. Once when a relief worker, returned from Russia, was talking to the children of the needs of the Russian peasants, Denys became so ill that he had to be sent out of the room. His mother had died at about the same time that all the other terrors came into his life. He drifted from grandmother to hired caretaker and back again to grandmother and then to the hands of a step-mother. He retained much of the terror he had experienced in his infancy.

Unfortunately, the pathetic in human life often expresses itself in unpleasant ways. It was one thing to pity the boy and another thing to be patient with further manifestations of his terror in the form of moral cowardice, cheating in small things, fear of responsibility in irksome situations, and the like. He was never known to tell a lie or to cheat in any obvious, big way; but he was entirely inadequate to assuming blame, meeting the standards of courageous sportsmanship, or resisting criticism or public opinion.

There was so much that was worth while in this boy, however, that gentleness and kindness, with repeated pointing of the way toward greater courage won steadily, though slowly. It was never necessary to bring him to a crisis. In fact, Denys had grown much beyond the elementary stage before he had gained sufficient courage to

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

meet any important crisis. He would have been completely crushed by it.

But from what has been heard of his college and early business career, he must have developed, not perhaps a robust and strenuous character, but enough to win him approval and affection and to maintain a fair moral standard in resisting the ordinary strains of life.

### MORBID ANXIETY<sup>1</sup>

Morbid anxiety is an important element in the study of adolescent peculiarities of conduct. It is more common than most teachers realize, for they see only the irrelevant details that hide the real condition. To them the girls so afflicted are merely troublesome or queer, whereas, as a matter of fact, these pupils may be suffering real distress from an indefinite and therefore terrifying dread lest the unknown thing that they desire may suddenly come to the surface and receive gratification. The fear is usually associated with sexual impulses, not understood as such by the adolescent. Being unable to give way by means of the natural outlet, not knowing enough to admit to themselves the cause of their restlessness, they manifest it physically in all kinds of undesirable behavior, and mentally in morbid anxiety.

Anita, a fourteen-year-old Italian girl, had labeled herself "boy-crazy" six months after her arrival at school. She waylaid boys in the halls, passed notes to them during recitations, attempted to make dates with them for

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<sup>1</sup> These examples of success and of failure in dealing with the problems of a single high school for girls in a large city in the Middle West are quoted from Edith O. Cuthbert, *The Maladjusted High School Girl—A Study in Guidance*, Master of Arts thesis, Ohio State University, 1926. The author, an assistant principal in charge of problem cases, was a student of Dr. Henry Goddard and Dr. Edgar A. Doll.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

walking home after school, and suggested auto rides during the noon hour. Fortunately, most of the boys avoided her; she was very unattractive in appearance, and had the reputation of being "queer." The storm broke when she was discovered kissing a colored boy.

Other unexplainable behavior included the tearing of textbooks, setting off the school fire-alarm, and dumping a can of scouring powder into the flour bin. "I just wanted to do something," was the only explanation she made.

A study of the home partly explained the trouble. A neurotic mother, who had had an unfortunate sex experience as a child, had repressed her daughter's social activities by way of protecting her from a similar experience. The girl had been told part of the story. She knew why she could not have boy friends at the house, why she had to hurry away from school the moment her last class was over, why she could not join any clubs; but no one had explained to her why she so desperately wanted to do those very things more than anything else in the world. She lived in constant fear of the never ceasing urge within her that kept pushing her into activities she recognized as queer and unwholesome.

The school nurse carefully explained to her the phenomena of adolescent development, and the final goal toward which it is directed. Then, although only a ninth-grade girl, she was invited to join the senior Red Cross class at the time when the subject of sex was being developed. This was arranged that she might hear the older girls, used to frank informal discussion, speak freely of their own feelings and experiences. Thus came this girl's first realization that she was not so very different after all from other girls. Before the month's

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

lessons were over, she, too, was taking part in the discussion, and the strained look had left her eyes.

Little could be done to improve Anita's home conditions. The mother's difficulty was explained to her, with the suggestion that since Anita now understood her own problem better, she might be able to help her mother. At least she might more patiently accept the restrictions placed upon her. The father finally consented that the child have some club life, and she was taken into two groups. In these she worked off some of the excess energy that had been troubling her.

With social relationships established and fears removed, the girl shows a marked improvement in health and general good looks. She worries about her mother and is still restless at times; occasionally she runs in to confess a tendency to break over. However, the peculiarities of her former conduct are gone, and she is a more contented and happy individual.

It is the duty of the high school to detect these cases early enough to avoid the anxiety state described above, to give opportunity for plenty of wholesome companionship between the sexes, to inform those threatened with anxiety neuroses of the nature of the struggle through which they are passing, to make the outlet possible in the future so ideal that it will become worth waiting for until the proper time arrives.

### PATHOLOGICAL LYING AND STEALING

Elizabeth, a seventeen-year-old girl of good mentality, was called in for conference one day because some class money with which she had been entrusted had disappeared. She claimed to have given it to Mary, the newly elected treasurer of the senior class. Mary, prostrate

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

in the dispensary and almost incoherent with fright, reiterated that she had never seen the money. Elizabeth specified the exact moment (the end of the seventh hour English recitation) when she had given it to Mary, and offered as proof of her integrity that she had more spending money than she could use—a fairly true statement. Mary, on the other hand, was poor, partly supporting herself as a waitress in a near-by restaurant, and desperately in need of funds for graduation clothes.

But Elizabeth had a reputation for extensive lying. In the past the simplest question put to her had brought a glib untruth, whether anything was thus to be gained or not. The slightest remark would bring an answer the veracity of which might be doubted. During the two years she had been enrolled at the school, several teachers had worked earnestly with the girl to eradicate this habit. Criticism was generally met by excuses created with astounding rapidity. However, no serious results to any one except to the girl herself had resulted from her lies, before this accusation against Mary was made. Moreover, to make her case stronger, she had never before been suspected of stealing.

Mary's poverty was a serious reality. Even though the girl's integrity had never been doubted, circumstantial evidence was strong enough to warrant considerable investigation. She was a delicate, sensitive girl, who before the three-day research had been completed, was in a state of nervous collapse over the disgrace and the fear that she would lose her job and her chance for graduation.

A study of Elizabeth's home gained very little. The father, a prosperous merchant, the mother, a well educated woman, repeatedly assured the visiting teacher that

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

Elizabeth had never been known to steal, that she had been given money whenever she askd for it, and that consequently there was no need for any such act. Yes, the child had lied considerably in the past, but she was outgrowing the habit, they believed, since it was less noticeable in the last few months. Both parents evidently resented the investigation.

Because Mary was in so serious a nervous condition, it was not before every other effort had failed that the girls were made to face each other. But as a final recourse this was done. By this time Elizabeth, too, was showing signs of strain, and at the sight of the really startling change in Mary, and the serious faces of the principal, police officer, and others gathered for the conference, the girl's nerve suddenly broke down. It was not true that she had given Mary the money, she declared. Her sister, who had borrowed it from her one day, had not returned it as yet; and Elizabeth had not wanted to ask her mother for as large an amount as that (twelve dollars) without giving an explanation. And she could not tell on her sister, of course. An immediate telephone call to the sister at her place of business brought an indignant denial of the story, and another call brought the father to the school in haste. His resentment gone, he now told a long story of his daughter's past offenses in stealing, all of which he had concealed for fear she might be sent to a reformatory, or, what seemed still worse to him, to a hospital for the insane. The girl's behavior was so crazy, he said; there was no sense to most of her lies, no reason for her thieving. The thought of an insane uncle had helped to frighten him into this false protection of his daughter.

A further study of the girl and an attempt at adjust-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

ment were made impossible by her immediate removal from school.

### FIGHTING THE ADMISSION OF INFERIORITY

The high school sometimes meets conduct disorders that result from the distorting of reality, such as the following battle with inferiority.

Magnolia, colored, although in the ninth grade had been reported repeatedly for street fighting, and for picking quarrels with white girls in the halls. She had entered high school from a school in the South, with a good record of scholarship and conduct. However, she had had poor preparation, and with an I.Q. of 80, did not make much of a showing during the first few weeks of school. But she was very much in evidence in other directions. She was small for her fifteen years, but very strong, and she knew how to use her teeth. It was easy to pick a quarrel with a white girl on the street, wait until a crowd collected, and then amid the acclamations of her group, win an easy victory over her badly frightened victim.

A study of the problem revealed the following facts: In the small colored school in Georgia, Magnolia had stood first among her classmates. She had heard rosy tales of the North, where the negro had as many privileges as the whites. After graduating from the eighth grade, she begged to be allowed to spend a year with an aunt in this northern land of promise. On her arrival she learned that because of her age she must go to school. The thoughts of past victories made her welcome this unexpected development, and with bubbling enthusiasm she wrote home that she was to go to *high* school with *white* girls. It was only a week, however,

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

before she recognized her inability to keep up with the class. Moreover, the longed-for equality did not materialize. Nearly every one was kind, but race prejudice—expressed differently from that of the South, but race prejudice nevertheless—confronted her on all sides. Unwilling to admit her mental inferiority and her low social standing, she must have unconsciously decided to excel where she was confident she could. Hence the street fights from which she always came forth triumphant. Meanwhile she excused her poor grades with the statement that the teachers were not fair to her because she was black.

Placed in a group of mixed races where the mentality of the class corresponded with her own, and where the emphasis was laid on industrial rather than intellectual training, Magnolia gradually lost the defiant manner she had assumed. In a short time she discovered that she could keep up with this new class. Then her ambitions soared. To lead these northern blacks and whites just as she had led her class in the South—what joy that would be! With this as a spur she made remarkable progress, and was soon elected Student Council representative from her home room. At class parties she met little race discrimination, and was soon working on committees, planning vaudeville stunts, and making herself generally liked. The fighting ceased, and although the girl will never fit into a class of average students, she has become a normal, adjusted member of her own group. She gives promise of becoming an excellent housekeeper at some time after her industrial training has been finished. Moreover, she has made a big step necessary for adjustment to life; for while she has made a place for herself in her class, she recognizes her limitations. She

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

has admitted a certain defeat, and is trying to correct it by learning to do something she has the ability to do well. She accepts more calmly now the snubs of the outside social world; for she has the satisfaction of knowing that she fits into a certain groove better than many another person might. Cannot she make waffles better than most white folks she knows!

### CONVERSION HYSTERIA

The deliberate malingerer can be found in considerable numbers in any school. Occasionally, however, a child believes a disability to be real when it is not. He suffers at such a time from self-suggestion, based upon a deeply imbedded wish. Since physical excuses are the most convenient and plausible, the superficial symptoms that appear are usually bodily ailments. These serve as substitutes for an underlying emotional tension. There is no organic basis for the defect, although there may be real suffering. Usually egocentric, the subject enjoys the affliction because it brings him the attention he craves, and excuses him from the duties he dislikes. When this tendency to conceal the real cause by placing the blame elsewhere is developed to an abnormal degree, it is called conversion hysteria.

Dorothy, who entered in September on her fourteenth birthday, was absent about seventy-five days out of ninety during the first semester. The frequent home visits of the attendance officer and nurse invariably resulted in reports that the girl was found sick in bed. Alternating pains and numbness made it impossible for her to stand upon her left leg, which had recently been hurt when she slipped on the fire escape. The injury at the time had been slight, causing only two days'

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

absence, but almost immediately the other attacks began. They would last about a week, when the girl would return to school for a day, only to begin on the following day another week's absence.

On the occasional day on which she was at school, she was excited and nervous, and talked incessantly about her sickness, how many doctors she had had, and how much she had suffered. The school doctor could find no cause for her trouble, and the girl looked blooming. After the father had called in doctors, chiropractors, osteopaths, faith-healers, all to no avail, he consented finally to take her to the Child Guidance Clinic. A week in the hands of an expert psychiatrist resulted in the following story.

Because of financial reverses the family had recently moved from the near-by country into a downtown district of the city. The girl's first week at school had been a shock to her. Never before had she been among so many poorly dressed, foreign, and colored children. Moreover, the standard of work was higher than that of the school from which she had come; and although Dorothy was a little above the normal in intelligence, she detested hard work. In the second week came the accident on the fire escape that resulted in the bruised and skinned leg, and two delightful days at home away from the horrid school.

Next door a young boy was convalescing from a spinal injury. The living rooms into which the children were moved for the day had windows directly facing each other. It was much more interesting to spell on fingers across the open space than to go to school, even though one got so much delightful attention there when sick.

Nevertheless Dorothy, though lazy, had certain ambi-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

tions; and she worried secretly over her coming failures. If her leg continued to trouble her, how could she finish high school? She welcomed the sympathetic questions of the psychiatrist, therefore, and the trouble was soon uncovered. His explanation of the mental processes behind the ruse she had used set her to thinking. At the beginning of the new term a month later, the numbness had disappeared, and she was back at school, determined to make good during the second semester. A feeling of shame over the experience followed her realization of the true nature of it, and this she still has to overcome; nevertheless the girl gives fair promise of a complete and speedy recovery to normal adjustment.

This example of wish-fulfilling fantasy, a form of daydreaming, reveals another type of maladjustment possible among high-school pupils. Daydreaming is a definite characteristic of adolescence, and when correctly directed may contribute to character-building. When it is a spur to activity, an incentive to gain victory over the hard facts of reality, it is a blessing; when it is a substitute for reality, it becomes a menace. It is the duty of the high school to watch the daydreamer and make reality so satisfactory that he will want to live in it, rather than forsake it for fantasy.

### MENTAL HEALTH FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

In all these studies, the child has to be "interpreted" to parents and teachers. But the task does not end there. Often this is only where it begins.

The psychiatrist and the teacher work out with all care a program for the parents of the maladjusted youngster. Who is at hand to see that these recommendations are carried out? If the mother herself gives way

## MENTAL HYGIENE PRESCRIBES

to tantrums or morbid fears, little coöperation can be expected. Her own personality may be as sorely in need of psychiatric treatment as her child's.

So may the teacher's. The men and women in charge of our classes are human beings, not so very different from other folk. They too may be unduly worried, or fond of their misery, or flighty and irresponsible, or easily enraged, or hard to work with. They have been known to clash with one another and with the pupils whom they are expected to lead to self-control. Are they cranky because their health is deficient, or because of some inferiority complex, or do they get that way just because they are teachers? There is no inherent reason why being a teacher should spoil a good human being. Clinics for teachers would seem to be just as necessary as graduate courses in methods of education. The day will come when schools will find that for the sake of mental health in the children, provision for this need must be made no less for the parents and for the teachers.

## CHAPTER IX

### INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

"I divide people into two classes," said one man; "the believers and the unbelievers." "I also divide them into two classes," said a second man; "the active and the dreaming." "I, too, divide people into two classes," said a third man, and he spoke sadly, "those who divide folks into two classes and those who do not."

THE cases cited in the preceding chapter remind us that the treatment of character problems is a much more complicated business than earlier times thought it. Formerly, when a child sulked or raged or played truant, the judgment of its elders was simple: the child was bad and there was nothing more to do than find the one remedy, either a bribe or a punishment. To-day we look on misbehavior (where it is unusual in degree or kind) as a symptom—the whining child, for example, may be fatigued. In some instances we decide, on the basis of expert judgment, that being what they are, some children can no more be expected to behave normally than children who are blind, crippled, or deaf, can be expected to see, dance, or hear, like others. Although this sounds fatalistic, it does not mean surrender. It means trying to understand, instead of storming, punishing, lamenting. It means objectively studying every possible avenue along which hope for readjustment and prevention can be discovered. The old epithet "born criminal" no informed person of to-day ever fastens upon anybody. He says instead, "Let us see what we can do."

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

### CLINICAL STUDY

Here we draw again upon the study referred to in the foregoing chapter:<sup>1</sup>

How shall we know when youth is maladjusted? In the past, maladjustment was discovered in a haphazard way, chiefly by the uncomfortable feeling experienced by adults at some untoward activity of a developing boy or girl. If a pupil was failing in his work, if he was a disturbing element in a classroom, if he was inattentive or noticeably nervous, or if he appeared physically unfit in any way, the treatment generally prescribed was advice to study harder, leave school, go to a doctor. If he had committed a startling offense, the culprit was taken to the principal, reprimanded, suspended, perhaps expelled. The school handled serious trouble chiefly by ridding itself of the offender. To-day we recognize the important rôle that emotional reactions play in life, and we know that the problems they create are practically never simple, either in causation or in effect. Yet even now we stress too much the penalty the misdemeanant must pay, and consider too little the causes of the act. Most certainly we depend too much upon social manifestations to bring these cases to our immediate attention. It is only when Sarah actually commits a theft of pretty wearing apparel that we notice the girl's beauty-starved nature that prompted the act. When tenth-grade Rose suddenly bites a teacher's arm, we awake to the fact that she is a bundle of raw nerves, the result of a misplaced vertebra. But when we wait for personal discomfort of our own to be experienced, or for tragedy to develop, before we begin to work on the girl, we may

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<sup>1</sup> Edith O. Cuthbert, *The Maladjusted High School Girl*, p. 153.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

be too late to be of any real help. The school must be constantly on the alert for the slightest signs of conflict, sensitive to the very beginnings of abnormal conduct.

The old psychology threw but little light on the problem. It dealt almost exclusively with the generic nature of mental life in human beings, apart from their conduct as a whole and apart from the manner in which different environments influence different individuals. Although the first step in removing a person's difficulties is generally to determine his mental make-up, in the past, when this was done at all, snap judgment seemed to be enough. Now and then an individual teacher endowed with an abundance of common sense, achieved success in an intuitive disposition of a problem. But the new psychology now furnishes us with much additional knowledge. The Freudian theory, for example, has taught us how conflict and its resultant repression may (sometimes) injure the mind. The influence of the subconscious, the part phantasy plays when it is not replaced by reality in the developing child, the effect of buried fears and anxieties, the totality of reactions that must be considered, the possibilities of reeducation through new activities, the existence of individual differences—all these represent some of the fruitful ideas which modern psychology has brought to the study.

To discover individual differences a battery of tests was devised. In the beginning attention was paid chiefly to intelligence testing, which seemed to explain many problems of maladjustment. Further research, however, resulted in an unexpected emphasis on the nonintellectual factors that influence conduct. These, of course, can be discovered only by intense study of the individual.

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

But, unfortunately, in most schools emphasis is being placed on psychological study of groups of pupils rather than on the individual child. Classifying pupils on the basis of group similarities is important, but such group study cannot take the place of the search for individual characteristics. The problem is made by the individual, and its solution lies in the careful study of that individual. Herein, then, lies the value of clinical psychology, with its study of the entire child, not merely of his intelligence.

The purpose of clinical psychology is summed up in that word "individual." It concerns itself with those characteristics of the individual wherein he is *different* from others. It uncovers these attributes, studies and evaluates them. If they are manifesting themselves as abnormal behavior deviations, it attempts to eliminate them, or turn them into correct channels. If they prove to be desirable qualities, it fosters them, creates a wholesome atmosphere for their development, and safeguards them as the most precious heritage the child possesses.

Clinical psychology and psychiatry therefore make up the new equipment that would seem to promise the chief help for the future. Child guidance clinics are appearing in many of the larger cities, and are operated as experimental stations at universities. Occasionally we come upon state projects like the Ohio State Bureau of Juvenile Research at Columbus. But these, unfortunately, can reach only a comparatively few children. The need for the child to-day is a clinic in every school, not only for the treating of violent problems, but for the preventive work it can accomplish. In very few schools is there a program set up for the school as a whole, whereby definite study is made not only to adjust

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

troublesome pupils, but to detect those undergoing conflict before such conflict results in actual outbreak.

The major causes of conflict naturally group themselves as:

- I. Scholastic—conditions for which the school is responsible
- II. Personal—physical, intellectual, and emotional handicaps
- III. Social—influences of home and neighborhood

I. *School conditions.* The school life of the adolescent girl may be a serious source of dissatisfaction as a result of faults of early training, bad organization, or faulty teaching methods. Summed up as discovered through [this series of] case studies, these causes stand as follows:

1. Lack of equipment (knowledge of fundamentals) when entering high school
2. Lack of definite objective
3. Bad habits of study, improper training in concentration and attention
4. Lack of encouragement
5. Overstimulation—educational overpressure, and the driving of ambitious parents
6. Placing in unsuitable courses—those in which the girl is not interested, or which she has not the ability to handle
7. Poor classification
8. Too large classes
9. No provision for the exceptional child in appropriate modification of course of study and methods of training
10. Bad disciplinary power on the part of the teacher
11. Devotion of teacher to subject rather than to pupil
12. Lack of adjustment of teacher herself
13. Discovery that breaking school rules brings a kind of social success

II. *Personal Causes.* The fact that the high-school girl is *adolescent* colors all causes of her maladjustment. Those classified as personal, however, reveal the strain of puberty more than do the others. At this time the

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

girl is flooded with a new energy that suddenly shoots forward her physical and mental growth. Physical discomfort and often danger accompany the bodily changes; the mental development brings new interests, curiosities, perplexities; the emotions are intensified, and new and troublesome ones arise, bringing in their wake bewilderment, anxieties, and conflicts. The personal causal factors, characteristic of this period, that are presented here are those that appear most often in the case histories or those that have had the most serious effect on the girl studied.

### 1. Physical

- a. Sudden growth in height and weight, bringing physical discomfort that results in irritability
- b. Heart strain resulting from the extra work the heart must do to care for the enlarged arteries and increased blood pressure
- c. Upsets of the equilibrium of the glands of internal secretion while making the changes of this period. These disturbances greatly accelerate or retard normal development
  - (1) Goiter trouble. The thyroid has a bad record in the girls studied
  - (2) The pituitary
    - (a) Undersecretion makes for lessened growth
    - (b) Oversecretion for excessive growth
    - (c) Possible swelling at menstrual periods, and accompanying pressure on bone cavity may explain attacks of migraine
  - (3) Reproductive glands in process of development bring pain, bodily lassitude, or emotional shock, any of which may augment irritability, and lessen self-control
- d. Nutritional diseases
- e. Chlorosis—the anemia of adolescence
- f. Hereditary traits of the family may appear at this time

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

- g. Postural defects as a result of rapid growth and lack of proper corrective exercises
  - h. Sexual maturity, bringing new physical powers, offering new possibilities for wrongdoing
  - i. A few causes not necessarily connected with adolescent changes:
    - (1) Bad physical tone as a result of unhygienic living
    - (2) Infections, causing temporary or even permanent personality changes, as in "sleeping sickness"
    - (3) Speech defects
    - (4) Sensory defects
    - (5) Crippled condition or peculiar personal appearance, causing difficult adaptation to life, and bringing strain which manifests itself in periodic emotional outbursts
2. Intellectual and Emotional

The changes that are taking place in the vital organs, and especially in the glandular system, manifest themselves in mental and emotional states. Mental inferiority shows up more distinctly at this time when increasingly difficult subjects strain the girl's ability. Fears arise, all emotions intensify, and a new one—love for the opposite sex—prepares the way for more trouble.

Following are some of the mental and emotional disturbances that interfere with school work as noted during the three-year study of problem girls. Most, but not all, are particularly characteristic of adolescence.

- a. Some cases of defective mentality (retarded, borderline) that resulted in school failure
- b. Special defect in one subject
- c. Antipathy to certain subjects
- d. Ambition exceeding mental capacity
- e. Superior mentality, which, because it was not understood or provided for by suitable courses and not given enough to do, resulted in behavior problems.
- f. Instability, due to glandular changes, making the girl responsive to evil suggestion
- g. Ineffective control of personal affairs as shown in habitual tardiness, untidiness, losing of personal effects

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

- h.* Marked tendency toward making herself conspicuous, as in the use of immodest dress, over-use of cosmetics, loud talking and laughing
- i.* Morbid emotional states. Exclusiveness
- j.* Dementia praecox, resulting in dulling of the moral sense, defective judgment, loss of ambition and of the touch with reality
- k.* Delusions, paranoiac tendencies
- l.* Manic-depressive tendencies
- m.* Over-suggestibility
- n.* Constitutional psychopathic inferiority, including the most difficult problems of adolescent behavior to correct, since the psychopath is unable to profit by experience
- o.* Worry over family or financial troubles
- p.* Melancholia—due to morbid introspection into the physical and mental life
- q.* Psychoneuroses—neurasthenia, hysteria, “nerves”
- r.* Spiritual longings and religious difficulties
- s.* Complexes, resulting from early sex experiences, and from sensitiveness to menstrual flow
- t.* Feelings of inferiority, with reactions toward compensation

*III. Social.* Whatever approach is taken to the study of aberrations of personality and behavior, the worker is led finally into the home. We can measure and weigh and analyze and diagnose the individual girl until we know her physically and mentally, but we do not really understand her until we see her as a human being, responding to other human beings—a product of the socializing influences of home and neighborhood. Favorable home and community conditions have been known to make happy and useful citizens out of girls of border line intelligence. The same girls under unfavorable environmental conditions would probably not have escaped demoralization. On the other hand, of course, there are numerous cases where the individual without organic or

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

functional weaknesses has made good in spite of the worst possible surroundings. Social workers, however, have found environmental causes important factors in delinquency, and these certainly are the basis for most of the adolescent emotional upsets that the school has to handle.

1. The Home<sup>1</sup>
2. The Neighborhood
  - a. Crowded district
  - b. Bad housing conditions, and lack of street supervision, making immorality easy
  - c. Vicious amusements
  - d. Lack of clean, wholesome, upbuilding recreation for leisure hours
  - e. Excessive facilities for amusement, taking too much time from studies and overtiring the developing girl
  - f. Bad associates—not only girls of loose morals, but unwise adults who may teach girl faulty emotional reactions
  - g. Too many outside social duties that sap the strength of the young girl and force maturity
  - h. Exploitation of the girl in employment
  - i. Contaminating conditions of employment

Many causes of maladjustment cannot be classified except as developing out of the complex situation of adolescence. The interplay of physical disorders, awakened social consciousness, new ideas, wants, desires, cravings, quickly changing mental attitudes, impulsive actions, resentment of control, and fierce longing for independence explain most of the troubles of the school with the adolescent girl. Many of the disturbances are perfectly "normal" abnormalities of the emotions of puberty, and will pass with the maturing of the individual; others will become permanent disabilities un-

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 20ff.

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

less corrected at this time. If tragedies are to be averted, there is need of utmost care and watchfulness in all cases.<sup>1</sup>

### THE DIFFERENT NORMAL

If this method of studying the individual child works with the maladjusted, what inviting prospects it opens for the better upbringing of the normal and superior types! There is no good reason why programs of work, study, play must forever be identical for all children, even of the same level of intelligence. Mass education is forced upon us in most cities by the present state of our social insight and abilities; and it is in constant danger of overprizing uniformity. Although schools of to-day, for all their defects, represent a great advance over the time when illiteracy was the lot of most and nobody cared, they can certainly be made vastly better. Already the more enlightened have caught sight of the fact that just as intelligence quotients vary, so do other gifts and dispositions; and instead of regarding these diversities as so many obstacles to the smooth running of the administrative machinery, they ask how all this wealth—often priceless just because of its variety—can be developed most fruitfully.

Most teachers, unfortunately, are still inclined to judge a child chiefly in terms of ability to do book work. Even so useful a procedure as intelligence testing must bear a certain share of blame for this very common mistake. Because the intelligence scale is so helpful within its own special field, not a few teachers are misled into supposing that a low rating is the sign of something in-

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<sup>1</sup> Edith O. Cuthbert, *The Maladjusted High School Girl*; see note, p. 153.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

herently and unalterably inferior. Are there not gifts however that the paper tests utterly fail to reveal? After citing instances where the tests prove highly beneficial, especially in measuring where a child is likely to stand within a given class, a psychologist adds these words of caution:<sup>1</sup>

The intelligence test is made by academic-minded men, holders of degrees, schoolmen of high rank. After painstaking research and statistical standardization, they have assembled a group of tests combining with consummate cleverness elements of those verbalistic, abstract qualities which seem to them essential for mental ability. It is extraordinarily effective in testing the thing which it tests. If the I. Q.'s that result from the test procedure are ranked, they are found to arrange themselves on a normal frequency distribution and show extremely high correlation with school success, present and future. It can be determined with very reasonable assurance that those above a certain mark can probably succeed in college, while those below another mark will probably never go farther than the elementary grades. This fact makes the test a most valuable academic, educational tool; there is nothing mysterious about this. That is just what it was made to be.

The fallacy in the claim creeps in with the name of the thing tested, a fallacy so great as to render the claim a real presumption. These academic men call this thing intelligence, a name used in common speech as the synonym of good sense, so that a stigma at once attaches to a low rating. There is a most insidious danger in the human tendency to confuse difference with inferiority. A little child asked to define the difference between two objects usually says that one is better than the other. To the Greeks other nations were barbarians. To the civilized man, the Indian of the plains or the Bedouin of the desert, perfectly adapted to his environment and able to conduct his own life satisfactorily, appears inferior.

By the same sort of reasoning, the educational world has come to regard as inferior all those many other types of ability

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<sup>1</sup> Anna G. Gillingham, "Different—Not Better Nor Worse," *School and Home*, January, 1930.

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

which function low in the I. Q. scale and do not succeed in classroom work. From time to time some investigation is made which shows how many outstanding people had been failures in the academic grind. One cannot blame the father, familiar with his alert, eager, little son grappling with problems of mechanics or social adjustment, for exclaiming in disgust, "They say my boy has a low I. Q. I don't take much stock in those tests. My boy's no fool." It is not unusual to discover a child completely failing in his school work who can pass a mechanical test or handle a group of his peers better than can his college-degreed teacher. A story to the point is that of the unhappy princess born with tiny feet in a court where large feet constituted the mark of royal birth. Many a capable child who can reason well with objective realities but not with abstractions finds himself similarly out of favor in the ordinary classroom.

Gradually we are learning to think of intelligence as a word to be pluralized. There are various *intelligences*. Mechanical skill is not to be disparaged in our machine age, nor is the inventor's imagination, nor the manual dexterity necessary to keep the machines at work. Even less in our closely organized group life should we disparage qualities of social leadership and the salesman's ability to persuade others. Musical and artistic contributions need to be fostered in every possible way; but as we advance in the construction of tests for these qualities and arrange our results again on a frequency distribution, we discover that they bear little relation to each other—the highest on one scale may even be lowest in another. The ranking in some of our shop classes has been almost the exact reversal of the ranking by intelligence tests.

Not every one cares to be artistic or mechanical, or even academic; and there would be no great harm done by the academician's claim to distinction if he had not taken to himself the word "intelligence." Every one does wish to be considered sensible; and when sense and academic success are made one, the child who does not think with symbols and abstractions finds himself branded as inferior, instead of being recognized and encouraged as self-respectingly different. Now it is absolutely essential for the development of a child's mind and character that he feel himself adequate. He must be successful in some way. Uncounted children who might have

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

made brilliant contributions have been embittered and dwarfed because they were academic failures and no other possibilities were offered them. What unspeakable comfort it has afforded many a boy in the last three years to know that Lindbergh was no scholar!

### APPLICATIONS

It is impossible to say in advance where every child is likely to show special interest or aptitude. Before judging him, give him every chance. A certain school was made the owner of a telescope. Nobody could have said beforehand which children would make the best use of this acquisition. To everybody's surprise, some of the pupils showed themselves remarkably eager to use the telescope regularly, even after the first novelty had passed. Of their own accord, they wanted to learn more about the sights of which other children spoke. To use the telescope with profit, they consulted books and magazines they would otherwise never have opened.

In many schools to-day, musical aptitudes are being discovered and encouraged by letting the children make simple instruments of their own, pipes of Pan, marimbas, water glasses. A certain boy who had been counted dull surpassed all the others in the skill with which he drew different tones from Indian drums of his own making.

Other gifts may likewise be waiting for nothing more than just such a chance. There is no longer any good reason why the school must concentrate its energies upon a training that offers all the children the same course. This older practice was due in large part to a false conception of democracy and equality. All were to get an equal opportunity. To-day our practice is more conscious of the truth that the worst of all inequalities is to treat

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

unequals alike. Although there is exaggeration and distortion in the common charge that the chief menace in America is contentment with standardized mediocrity, schools and homes can do still more than at present to encourage diverse excellences.

It is out of the boys and girls who were "different" that the great gains to the world have come. Madame Curie as a child was unlike other little Polish girls in her interest in her father's chemistry. Lindbergh was a regular fellow but also different from the other boys. Every child is in that respect like him. But mass education forces too many teachers to concern themselves with what the children have in common. And all the time there are unmistakable signs that they are also unlike. John is interested in collecting stamps. William loves to tinker around with tools. Mary, in marked contrast with her sister who sews dresses for dolls, prefers to use a workbench where she makes puppets. Henry can never get tired of reading about explorers and travelers. Alice is a "born manager," and Jane is the perfect hostess. School and home together will see that along with the things all these children must learn together, John is led on to special work in geography and history, William to mechanics and science, and the others to where their aptitudes point.

If in other respects children show the inferiority complex, we can encourage them to compensate by means of every gift we can find in them. As we saw in the cases of maladjustment, one of the chief influences for mental health is the self-confidence developed by doing at least one thing with salient success. This is just as true of the normal child. The child of preschool age learns to feel at home in this large and strange world of ours by

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

mastering difficulties. He learns to walk, then to get up and down stairs without falling, to move a chair, to pile up blocks. Every such achievement, ridiculously petty to unsympathetic eyes, is to the child a triumph, a step up on the ladder of self-reliance. Then the child comes to a school where unfortunately this principle is forgotten in the hurry to have all the children cover the same ground in the three R's. For many a youngster the eager moving up to further self-confidence now receives a hurt that may leave permanent effects—shyness, evasion, or silly, boastful compensation in other directions. It is to prevent these that the better education of to-day offers children more opportunities to find themselves than they can have when books are their only chance. Happily has it been said that "experimental" education refers not only to the fact that some schools are trying out first what others will do later, but also to the fact that all schools should give the child every chance to experiment with the activities that will encourage his hidden gifts to emerge.

These gifts, as we shall see in the next chapter, are our best allies in leading children from what they already like to what they ought to like. The boy who does not care for reading is not at all hopeless. Perhaps he may be like the children who turned to books on astronomy only because of that new telescope. The boy who seemed to have no fondness for music was led to make the Indian drums from his skill at the workbench. When the "collecting bug" gets her children, the wise mother does not complain about their filling up the house with rubbish. It is much easier to teach them orderly ways of keeping their minerals, shells, plants, animals, stamps, posters, than it is to generate such interest. And every interest

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

can be made the starting point for ventures into some new field related to it.

The gain in thus saving human lives from boredom and mediocrity is beyond measure. Why do so many adults say that they hate "good" music? Why do they waste evenings at trivial movies? Why do some imagine that the only way to get a "kick" out of life is by rowdy parties? Why are so many graduates like one of whom it was said that if an idea entered his head, it perished of loneliness? As little children all these people had an eager interest in the worth-while things in the world around them. They loved birds, sunshine, flowers, good music, wholesome stories, simple and clean fun. Why should not these loves continue all through life and contribute increasing benefits to personality? One way to assure this is to be on the lookout for all the desirable aptitudes or skills that can be encouraged to assert themselves. Then it is the business of home, school, community to give these potentialities every possible welcome, and without stopping when the children are still very young. Once it was believed that college glee clubs could not sing anything better than "The Bulldog on the Bank." Now there are some that delight just as large audiences as ever, but with Bach, Brahms, Schubert. What the seekers after brainless thrills need most is to develop their own most wholesome powers.

The relation of this to one's life work is of prime importance. "Of all the many needs of mankind, which am I best fitted to supply?" Men and women do their best work when the day's job gives them the chance to express their leading special aptitudes. Nothing else is better fitted to build up high-grade personality. In the years ahead, all our work will be reconstructed with

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

some such better motive to take the place now largely usurped by the money-making impulse. To-day the nearest that many people can approach to this ideal is to feel the joy described as "doing well the thing you like best and getting paid besides." Beyond that is the stage where there is so much of the doing-well-what-you-like-best that the rest does not matter any too much. This is by no means simple or easy to attain. But at least one direction for to-day is to encourage the differences that find healthful outlet in successful life work.

For all these reasons, the individual attention now bestowed upon "problem" cases and other select groups needs to be applied to all children without exception. Especially, let it be repeated, beware of labelling a child after only one test. It would do teachers good to run over at least once every year the long list of the illustrious whom some teacher or other branded as a dullard. Names like Scott, Darwin, Fulton, Goldsmith, Pasteur, come to mind at once. Two men who made priceless contributions to the very profession of teaching itself, Pestalozzi and Froebel, were known in their childhood as fools. Time has shown who were the foolish ones. "Talk of Columbus and Newton!" said Emerson. "I tell you the child just born . . . is the beginning of a revolution as great as there is. But you must have the believing and prophetic eye."

Not every child is a potential genius. The very word genius is meant to indicate the highly exceptional. Nor is it only artistic, or mechanical, or scientific skill that the world needs. The best of all arts is the art of living together aright. Every grace or gift that has anything to offer to this should receive every encouragement.

## CHAPTER X

### MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

To serve another's will is slavery; to serve my own is anarchy; to serve the right, and willingly, is freedom.

THE boy who answered his father's "Aren't you first in anything in your class?" by a cheerful, "Yes, I'm the first one out when the bell rings," is growing much less typical of most schools than he used to be. Now more children stay in school of their own accord long after the dismissal bell.

The old-fashioned school was not expected to be a place of joy. The moment the child entered, he was ordered about. A friendly, human whisper to his neighbor was a crime against the school regulations. Getting up from his seat was another offense. Asking a question of his teacher, although not a crime, was not particularly encouraged. Children were expected to listen, and they were to speak only when they were called upon.

In many classes the children looked upon the teacher frankly as a kind of enemy. Most if not all the teachers were apparently in a conspiracy to make life miserable. No wonder it was not considered bad form to cheat. The teacher was out to hurt the child. It was therefore no more wrong to get the better of the teacher than of any other enemy. The only thing to be concerned about was not to be caught. In the new school, there is much less cheating. The children understand that the teacher is their friend. They know that teachers and pupils are there to do certain useful things together; and where

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

people so work together, dishonesty is, to say the least, slightly foolish.

In general these methods require us to make child-nature, so far as we can, an ally, not an enemy. A little fellow, bubbling over with energy, in his first week at a new school, would climb out of the ground floor window into the yard, instead of marching out sedately with the others. The regular procession was much too easy and tame for him. In the older day, the teacher would have been horrified, and to protect society against a future criminal, would have punished. This boy's teacher did nothing of the sort. She recognized that there was good stuff in a little fellow who preferred adventure to safe routine. She gave him extra tasks to allow him to work off his excessive energy. She suggested casually that nice boys did not wait for teacher's back to be turned to make unorthodox exits but asked permission if they wanted to do a stunt. (And she gave the permission.) She spoke of how the younger children might be hurt by breaking the rules and asked pointedly if some stronger boy did not care to assist her in seeing that the whole class got in and out safely. Which of these appeals if any, prompted Duncan to change would be hard to say. Possibly he was moved only by a general sense that teacher was somehow voicing disapproval but doing it with kindness. At any rate, before long there was no more trouble from this brand of lively spirit. It paid to make an ally of natural impulses more wholesome than the desire to avoid punishment.

We may now consider in detail further ways by which this heartier coöperation is achieved.

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

### RESPECT THE STAGE OF GROWTH

A child of four dining with his family in a public restaurant was uncomfortable in the big chair in which he was seated. Thereupon he was placed in a high chair and was made happy. When later another family entered with a still younger child and the boy was asked to give up his high chair, he protested, cried, and was forced to yield. His parents were full of apologies to those who witnessed the incident.

No doubt children must be trained to courtesy and kindness. But the parents had no need to apologize, and no business to force the act. Kindness is best when it comes freely, and a child of four can hardly understand why he should give up his chair. Gifts come best from those who know how precious the gifts are. This child might have been persuaded to do the act to oblige his parents, but before a youngster can be led to still more genuine kindness, his elders must understand how he must first learn to prize what he is giving.

This sounds like giving in to the poorer traits in children just because these are natural. But, as Rousseau pointed out, "A virtue taught prematurely is sowing the seed of a vice in the future." At many points we are tempted to rush matters and forget that the child has many years still ahead. Although not impossible, it is hard enough in many colleges to get the pupils to run a self-government system that requires them to discipline one another for offenses. A common objection even in those years is, "Why should I tell? What business of mine is it if the other fellow cheats?" If it is difficult to get the higher standards of loyalty accepted in college years, we can see the folly of trying to get children in

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

the elementary school to appreciate them. At a stage when many of them are prone to tattle out of desire to see other children punished, it would hardly do to expect them to understand the better need.

The error is repeated in other ways. A group of eight-year-old children were committing to memory a set of verses that ran in some such fashion as this:

I live for those who love me,  
For those who hold me true,  
For the Heaven that bends above me,  
And the good that I can do;  
For the cause that needs assistance,  
For the wrongs that lack resistance,  
And the good that I can do.

The intention of the teacher was excellent. And many things must be learned whose meaning is better understood when experience matures. But how can children of eight get more than cant out of so premature a performance? Often they learn only words. "Susie Adams forgets Susie Adams" was the way one youngster is reputed to have understood "Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm."

## HIGHER LOVES DISPLACE THE LOWER

The best results take more time than many of us are disposed to give. The surest way to drive out any detrimental fondness is by what a preacher of the last century called "the expulsive power of a higher affection." Often we wonder why wickedness is so supremely attractive. Milton's Lucifer was intended to be the villain of *Paradise Lost*; but he proved himself more interesting than the hero. Must wickedness always be more dramatic? It does not have to be. If stories of crime in the news-

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

papers are more interesting than stories, let us say, of what the schools are trying to do for the modern world, it is because we have not yet trained the writers who can accustom readers to find the school news interesting. "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?"

An experimental school purchased as its quarters a house that had once been the residence of a very wealthy man. The walls were covered with panels of oak and walnut. Visitors to the school asked, "Are you not afraid that all this costly woodwork will be damaged by the children?" They had in mind the not uncommon urge of more than one child to mess things up when nobody is looking. As a matter of fact, after five years in the building there was scarcely a single instance where the walls or furnishings were deliberately disfigured in any way, and this in spite of the fact that the youngsters went from room to room with saws and hammers and had the greatest freedom in using paint brushes and crayons. The children were not at all abnormally gentle. The explanation is simply that they were so thoroughly happy doing worth-while things in the school that it never occurred to them to seek a good time in mischief. It is not true that children are necessarily more fond of wickedness. Where they can feel the joy of expressing their powers in sensible, upbuilding pursuits, there need be no fear that their "innate wickedness" must sooner or later crop out.

For children who misbehave, the treatment is not punishment (though there are indeed occasions where this can be very salutary) but interesting them in doing things for their school. A girl whose chief desire seemed to be to plague her teachers had the good luck to encounter one who was interested in household arts. An exhibit

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

in this field was being planned. The girl was entrusted with a good part of the shaping and the execution of these plans. She displayed a gift for hard work that was astonishing to all the other teachers. They saw the secret when it was shown to them.

To get kindness toward animals, have the children build a bird house, make a bird bath, join an Audubon club, take "bird walks," make photographs or pictures of birds and exhibit them. To drive out hazing, try using brains to devise interesting ways of welcoming newcomers and making them feel at home. The point has many bearings. No boy was ever weaned away from a fondness for the old-fashioned "penny dreadful" by telling him that he was wasting his time or corrupting his mind. The better way is to get him to read something like *Treasure Island*. The same is true of humor, music, friendship: the higher affection will of its own accord displace the lower.<sup>1</sup>

Here are the accounts of good times enjoyed by children in the Brooklyn Ethical Culture School. Each class sends in its news to the weekly mimeograph paper that they conduct. Among the items are the following:

Grade I—"We are studying about cotton and wool and silk and linen."

"We are making dyes and some of us are making it at home of vegetable and onion shells."

"We are making dyes. We have used red cabbage and black walnut shells and beets."

"We planted pansies in our window boxes."

"We are weaving rugs."

"We are weaving doll caps."

"We are going to transplant our flowers."

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<sup>1</sup> This subject is treated further in the chapters on the various school subjects.

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

"We planted a bean stalk."

"Thursday we went to a brick factory."

"Marion fixed the door of the rabbit-house."

"We are giving a shadow play."

Grade VI elaborated upon the following outline describing the happenings in a few days' visit to a farm. These were city children, many of them accustomed from babyhood to have servants wait upon them:

Walked to Bear Pond. Mr. Elliott told us about farm machinery. Every member of class plowed and helped to measure an acre. At night teacher read us "Son of the Middle Border." Walked to brook. Saw eggs in incubators. Bird walk. Trip to flour mill. Wrote poetry in the orchard. Poetry meeting, singing, corn-popping. Gathered eggs. Trip to fish hatchery. Saw pheasant farm. Helped at milking. Gave a play, *Daniel Boone*, to farm hands. Gathered specimens. Packed up. Out-door poetry meeting.

Detailed articles described the fourteen kinds of birds identified in a bird walk, and eighteen kinds of wild flowers encountered on a hike.

Another such project was a five-day visit by an eighth-grade class to Nassau Point, Long Island.

In preparation for the trip a collection of Long Island maps was made by the pupils and the teacher of Social Studies. The United States Geodetic Survey maps made us acquainted with the shore line in the neighborhood. Topographical maps were consulted for facts concerning altitudes and soil formation. Glacial maps were examined to learn about the influence of glacial moraine, glacial drift, and boulders. Automobile and railroad maps were used to study comparative routes.

Letters to the Long Island Chamber of Commerce brought rich material on all Long Island industries.

A collection was made of nature books to take along; and lists of the various forms of salt water life which the class expected to find were compiled. From the school library the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

pupils selected sea poems and prose for reading to the group indoors of an evening around the open fire.

In the music class the pupils made a study of the historic sea chanteys as the sailors sang them, and learned many of them, singing them later with great gusto.

Even arithmetic played its part in this unit of work. Comparisons were made by the pupils of the cost of the trip by auto and by rail; from the Long Island Station in Manhattan and in Brooklyn; the cost by single trip and the cost by fifty-trip ticket were compared. Timetables showed time and mileage and gave the rate per hour.

The railroad trip through Long Island during October was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. The gorgeous reds of the scrub oak and green of the pitch pine, the carpet of red and gold made by huckleberry and sumach, and overhead the blue sky and little white clouds drew exclamations of delight. The sudden flashing of thousands of white ducks turned the bald statements of the Chamber of Commerce pamphlet into poetry.

The first afternoon we scrambled down a sandy hillside and walked along the beach, each supplied with an old preserve bottle for specimens. It was low tide, and the sea life was abundant and vibrant. A spanking breeze whipped our faces and churned the water. Strange colors played upon the sea and caught our eyes.

In the evening around the fire we sang old chanteys, and listened spellbound to the magic of Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." There was no discussion or explanation, just intense absorption; and it was not until days afterwards, when the children wrote their own poems, that the teachers saw how deeply the poem had impressed them.

Friday morning we started off in a big bus to inspect some of the industries. First we visited a duck farm, where, alas, only four hundred breeding birds were to be seen, the remnants of a colony of twenty-five thousand.

Then we drove on to Greenport, one of the great centers of the oyster industry. In front of a series of low houses, we saw a huge hill of empty oyster shells which was being constantly enlarged by additions from an endless chain. Inside we saw many men at work, opening, washing and packing oysters which were being shipped to the Pacific Coast.

Then we wandered along the wharves of the charming village.

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

We rested on the wharves or on the boats and took out charcoal, drawing paper, and boards and rapidly snatched at the picturesque objects all around us.

In the evening around the open fire, we listened to a reading of Washington Irving's story of a hunt for treasure trove buried along the seashore.

Bright and early next morning we prepared a picnic lunch and all started down to the beach, where we boarded a sloop for a first-hand acquaintance with another important Long Island industry—scalloping. The captain and his mate were professional scallopers and soon introduced us to the fascinations of their job. Through the clear waters we saw the bivalves lying on the sand. We threw out the nets, pulled them slowly up on deck, and then with feverish excitement examined our haul. Scallops larger than any we had seen at low tide on the seashore were ours.

We anchored in the middle of the bay near a huge sunken boulder, doubtless a relic of the glacial age, and after a hearty meal we were taught how to bait our hooks for black fish. There is something primitive in every being; and when he actually succeeds in securing his own food, his satisfaction is intense.

Back at the house later, all made sketches of their specimens or wrote up their descriptions of sea life. That evening around the fire each read some sea poem or bit of prose which he or she had brought from the city. The selections had been admirably chosen, and were now read with a clearer understanding because of the experiences of the past few days.

Next morning saw all indoors, divided into two groups. In one room some were on the floor poring over maps of every description spread out before them. On the geodetic map they traced the course which the sloop had taken the day before. They all saw how the Glacial Age had left its imprint on the shores of that section. Do you suppose that a map of Long Island will ever be a commonplace bit of printing again?

Letter writing, the most real kind of composition, filled many a pause in the day's occupation, and several, without urging, started to write poetry or prose which later on at school they completed.

Back again in school the follow-up work began. A variety of nature exhibits was made ready for other classes to see.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

One group of girls brought back specimens of everything which had been found at the Point; and with sand and a mirror they made a replica of the Nassau Point beach. Another group prepared a shell exhibit on cotton under glass, each article named and classified. Others prepared alcohol jars for the oysters, scallops, mussels, razor clams, and whelks. The nature books with illustrations and brief descriptive articles which had been started at Nassau Point were completed.

The English work included original sea poems, sea stories, five-minute impressions, the daily log of the trip, as well as individual articles on scalloping, the black fish, duck farms, oyster fishing, and truck gardening.

These are opportunities enjoyed by children in a private school. Some day, when we take education as seriously as we like to imagine we do now, chances like these will be open to every child. The school will extend its walls to include all these other places where such richly creative opportunities are to be had. And then what chance will the tawdry, cheap amusements have alongside of these other joys?

### DOES INTEREST SOFTEN?

When, some twenty-five or more years ago, the new doctrine of interest, as against compulsion, began to make marked headway, the older folk were alarmed. They were sure that the youngsters would be softened by exemption from doing anything disagreeable. These fears have not been confirmed. The newer methods employed by the private experimental schools have won over more and more teachers and administrators in the public systems. These are now convinced that such methods are sound; and there remains only the question of how far our communities are ready and able to spend the moneys needed for putting these methods into practice.

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

The experience of the past two or three decades has brought ample proof that the children brought up on this more modern plan are not worse than their forbears. People are apt to remember the successes fostered by the older methods and to forget the failures. They leave out of sight the intense dislike that was bred by the older ways. Many children were permanently turned against the least suggestion that they go on of their own accord with their studies. If we could get at the reasons why so many adults with sufficient leisure to develop their minds, prefer trivialities, we should probably find that their dislike of further study springs from more or less conscious associations of childhood disgust.<sup>1</sup>

To be heartily interested in the work one is doing does not mean that the work is easy. Indeed, when it is too easy, the interest is killed. Fewer boys would care for baseball if the pitcher allowed them to score every time. The very difficulty makes the game interesting. Nor are the children always "born rebels." They are willing to abide by the rules of the game. They will not admit younger ones until these have learned the rules, and the younger ones are very eager indeed to be admitted. This is true also of other traditions. The children know that

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<sup>1</sup> A boy was taught by his mother never to leave a task uncompleted, and especially always to finish a book once started. For years after he reached adulthood, he dreaded to start a book, especially a long one, for fear it might not be interesting or useful, but would have to be finished . . . and it took many years to reevaluate this perfectly good teaching so that he could keep what was good and discard what was useless. . . . During all this time he never really understood why he had to act as he did, and it was only when the true motive for his conduct, the desire to do as his mother wished, came to clear consciousness that he was able to evaluate it and rearrange his conduct. W. A. White in M. Fishbein and W. A. White, *Why Men Fail* (The Century Co.), p. 14.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

to stage a play or graduation exercises successfully, they must come up to given standards. To do this they are not at all unwilling to do work that is hard.

This is quite different from its being merely disagreeable. When it has nothing to recommend it but the fact that it is disagreeable and therefore likely to improve our characters, not many of us warm up to it. On the contrary, the things we dislike we shirk; or at best we do them half-heartedly. Our minds are elsewhere. Any good habit resulting from doing disagreeable tasks is counterbalanced by the forming of habits of mind-wandering and pretense.

With what joy pupils come to the end of a course in which they are not interested! The books are tossed aside and never opened again. It takes a hardy person to suggest that John continue of his own accord to study more mathematics or Latin. Charles Lindbergh spent a year and a half at a university in which he did not pass. He took what he wanted, indifferent to any idea of getting credits, rejecting what did not interest him, but putting his heart into the studies that meant most to him. He certainly was capable of working hard. What he rejected was not difficult work but work without meaning to him.

Parents are worried about the new education only when they fail to get this distinction. They are quite right in holding that "making everything easy" will soften their children's fiber. They recall how in their own youth they were made to do many an unwelcome task. They are still obliged to keep at more than one uncongenial piece of work. There are two things, however, that they overlook. Nobody does the uncongenial task unless there is some satisfaction he expects to get

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

from it. Father does his disagreeable work in shop or office not at all as an exercise in moral athletics or merely in obedience to command, but because certain real meanings are present to him. He must earn his living. He wants to send the children to college. He wants to stand well in the eyes of his associates. He has a pride in his work. He knows from experience that even for so delightful a purpose as a fortnight's fishing vacation, he must make many preparations that in themselves are not particularly agreeable. The uncongenial details of life, in other words, get their "sense" from the thought of what they offer to the things he really wants. If he examines his experience without prejudice, he will find that he has very rarely done the disagreeable things without this propulsion. He would not have done them without some conviction that they were necessary steps to a larger, much-desired end.

In the second place, we gladly do much more than a minimum where interest is real. When Louis Pasteur was young, he could not afford to buy the chemicals which he needed for his experiments. On one occasion, he required sixty grams of phosphorus. To get these, he bought a bag of bones from the butcher and worked over them one Sunday from four o'clock in the morning to nine at night. "To business that we love we rise betimes and go to 't with delight."

Children are no different from their elders in this respect. They are as ready as we to tackle difficulties, but only those that possess vital meaning for them. No one who has ever observed a group of youngsters putting in hard work for weeks, getting out the school magazine, preparing for the school bazaar, organizing other projects of the kind described in these chapters, can say that they

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

are having a good time merely because it is an easy time. They are as much repelled as we are by tasks that fail to command their full powers. Welcoming therefore the challenge of tasks that are both difficult and appealing, they do not pitch their tools away after completing only a prescribed minimum, nor haggle with their teachers over the number of paragraphs to be studied. They do not evade or cheat. Which do we want—to have the school subjects merely pass through their heads for a time, or to have the children do the thinking and the other work whose effects are lasting?

Our business, then, is to study the children in order to find what are the interests that will call out their full strength. To let them go through school wasting their time in work done half-heartedly is a major offense. Where we have discovered a child's leading interest, we should work this to the full, insisting here upon complete neatness, thoroughness, superior grade. What harm is there if in the other subjects the child receives only the passing mark? His lasting strength will be developed along the line of his chief interest. There it is that we are justified in demanding of him a quality of work above the average.

Second, where necessary work needs to be done that is not congenial, the task of the craftsman in education is to find ways of getting even these things done willingly. The emphasis is upon the willingness. Very often, but largely when the children have already learned from experience to have faith in their elders, they are willing to take on trust the counsel that if they give themselves honestly to the first few chapters of the uninteresting book, they will find the rest of it quite absorbing. It is not impossible, in an atmosphere of this

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

kind, to get them to see the need for giving the disagreeable task at least the benefit of more than one honest trial. The skilled teacher will try every means of linking up the unwelcome task with aims already accepted. Just as the boy is willing enough to follow the rules of the athletic trainer about eating, smoking, exercise, for the sake of participating in the contest, so usually he is ready enough to do his arithmetic or his spelling when he understands to what end, meaningful to him, it leads.<sup>1</sup>

In short, the problem is not at all a matter of on the one hand, "Do this because you must," or on the other, the anarchistic "Do as you like." It is a problem of learning to do what is needful with all possible heartiness.

### DISOBEDIENCE NOT ALWAYS WICKED

The teacher of a fifth grade, unable to detect the individual responsible for an act of disorder, had punished the whole class. The children were highly indignant. That afternoon, however, one of them received an inspiration. The lesson in history had dealt with Magna Carta. When the session was over, the children met and drew up a Magna Carta of their own, the point of which was a protest against punishing an entire class for the misconduct of an individual. The teacher, gratified no doubt at this tangible evidence that at least one day's lesson had brought "results," yielded graciously and

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Ford, after branding history as all nonsense, has now become much interested in setting up a museum of antiques. Very probably it has dawned upon him at last that there is a certain connection in history and in physics between his gasoline engines and the spinning wheel. The starting point of this broader interest was something close to his own experience. Children are that way too.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

promised never to repeat the offense. The children for their part declared that they would try to see that so far as they could help, there would be no more misconduct among themselves.

Howsoever the times may be changing, obedience to elders is still necessary. Letting children entirely alone is the surest way to breed reckless self-seeking and serious damage to the health of body and mind. As we saw in an earlier chapter, there are many practices a child must follow before he is fully able to understand the reasons. But it is of the utmost importance that such obedience, like attention to study, be just as willing as possible. In the long run, those habits are surest to remain that have been cultivated with the least friction. For example, praise a child for doing right, and he will be more likely to repeat the act than if he is scolded for not doing it. Even if he cannot understand the reason for the act, he can appreciate the approval.

Every time that punishment is necessary, the elders would do well to offer a silent prayer for forgiveness. Punishment is a confession that better methods have failed. It is like a sleeping powder that a physician may feel himself obliged to prescribe for an emergency. Where there is no other way out at a particular moment for a patient badly in need of sleep, the doctor will sign the prescription. But he wants the patient to understand that the way to get sound sleep is to reconstruct his ways of living, his diet, exercise, ventilation. Punishment may be needed. But those who administer it need to remind themselves why.

There is no occasion to be frightened at children's exhibiting a stubborn will. The old idea was that such a will was essentially depraved and must be broken

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

early. But if we break the will that does mischief, we may at the same time be breaking the will that is needed to resist wrong. The men and women who show the strong wills were not always the docile, submissive children they would like their offspring to believe. Sir Wilfred Grenfell needed will power to establish his medical mission in bleak Labrador. In his autobiography he is frank enough to tell us that his boyhood was not exactly docile. He broke the rules of the school where he boarded, getting in at night over the roof and through the laundry window. These recitals need not surprise us. Indeed, when a man shows marked power of will, we may expect as often as not that in his childhood he gave his parents trouble. The thing to do is not to try to break such a will but to direct it intelligently. Here is a salient point at which the schools of to-day are being made over. They are giving children the chance to work off their energy in useful, constructive occupations instead of keeping them at their desks all day and punishing them when they rebel. Indeed, in no place is this method found more serviceable than in the modern reformatory. There the rebellious child gets enviable opportunities to spend his day in wholesome activities. If this kind of schooling is offered to boys and girls when they reach the reformatory, why should it not be supplied to all children so that they need never be sent there?

The school of the future will allow more and more opportunities for the self-government described in the next chapter. Children will be treated with more courtesy and with more appeal to their understanding of the reasons for conduct. They will be given increased practice in that self-control which the modern child learns when the mother, instead of rushing to him every

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

time he cries or makes a nuisance of himself, goes her way quietly with apparently no attention to him. Children will learn more and more from their classmates, as they now learn from one another through their games, to play fairly. Wherever they can be taught to control themselves by learning the consequences of their acts, we do better than attempting to teach them by word of mouth. Thrift can never be taught by lectures on economy so well as by getting an allowance of spending money, kept strictly to the prescribed amount, which the child is free to spend or not in a single orgy if he pleases.

### SELF-DIRECTION NOT TO BE FORCED

These are our resources against the lawlessness that may rightly be feared. The aim is "guided freedom and counselled spontaneity." It requires abundant practice in the actuality of freedom, and constant interpretation of the meaning of liberty. This matter of instruction will be discussed in a later chapter.

The process of training in such freedom is hardly the old-fashioned "discipline," even though so often the modern school must seem painfully untidy as contrasted with the trim classrooms of earlier days. Self-government is frequently quite messy and troublesome to the teachers. They can understand why adult countries have welcomed benevolent autocrats.

But to the ethically thoughtful, the result of chief importance is not at all the material advantage that can be reaped just as well under a benevolent autocracy, if not better. The main benefit is what people can make of themselves through the chance for that initiative, voluntary responsibility, and coöperation that democracy alone can offer. When Carl Schurz, as he tells us in

## MAKING NATURE AN ALLY

his *Reminiscences*, visited Prince Bismarck, the conversation turned on what the latter called America's lack of reverence and order. Bismarck seemed struck, however, added Schurz, with "my observation that the American people would hardly have become the energetic, self-reliant people they are if there had been a privy-councillor or a police captain stationed at every mud puddle to keep them from falling in."

The reasoning is sound. Men and women and children grow in mentality by exercising their own intelligence instead of taking the ready-made results of the deliberations of other minds. They must put forth their own wills, not accept the volitions of others. They grow as moral beings the more intelligently, the more freely, and the more public-spiritedly they coöperate with their fellows in deciding what the collective life shall be and in sharing the responsibility for the outcome. This personal growth is the one result of paramount importance; and it explains why even the most efficient bureaucracy is less to be desired than even such groping, blundering democracy as we know to-day. If we never let children walk alone for fear of stumbling, they will never come to make use of their limbs. They learn because they fall and then get up.

All this requires an intelligent patience. The best in our lives can never be forced. The law can compel a man to observe the traffic regulations, but it cannot compel him to drive his car on an errand of mercy. People obey half-heartedly, or flout, the laws that they do not want to obey. But even if the police could compel us to keep every statute, the best and richest part of our lives would be untouched by any such compulsion.

The root problem is a question of what kinds of love

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

will be master. What the modern school is trying to do is to win the child to these better loves. In the long run, they are a matter of the child's own free and willing choice. We tell our boys and girls the fable of the North Wind and the East Wind, hoping that they will learn from the story that by and large the gentler methods are the wiser. The fable has its lesson no less for teachers and parents.

PART III  
WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO



## CHAPTER XI

### LEARNING BY DOING

If our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd  
But to fine issues.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THERE is a world's difference between having a character and just a moral vocabulary," says John L. Elliott of the New York Ethical Culture School. How do we learn swimming? Are not the "real" people those who live a certain life instead of talking or hearing of it?

The moral teaching most likely to prove itself vital is that which children get from their manner of living out the situations in which they find themselves from day to day. Children who are working a school garden have constant opportunities for quarrels over who shall now have the rake, the hoe, or the watering can. "Now you are stepping on my plot." The right practice on just such occasions as these gives the best chance to learn important truths.

This is another way of saying that character is unthinkable without habits. What we are shows itself in what we do. And the most effective way of understanding the meaning of the things that need to be done is to do them.

#### WAYS OF STUDYING

What resources for habit-building have we? In spite of the fact that modern schooling now gives a new atten-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

tion to "activities," extra-curricular and others, one important moral opportunity is still found in learning good, workmanlike habits of study. Progressive methods, as the preceding chapter tried to show, are not at all neglectful of these. Children still need to exercise their brains in hard work, to feel the joy of this kind of victory over obstacles. The "interest" idea is trying only to make such exercise more genuine and more effective by getting their fullest coöperation.

Hence the importance of teaching them to study intelligently rather than to stuff themselves (or be stuffed by the teacher) with information. How can a child be helped to concentrate? How can he learn to create for himself an atmosphere favorable to work? On what should he concentrate? How tell at what the book assignment is arriving? How collect data and organize them? How judge among the data and learn which to reject and which to include? How discriminate between more and less important, between partisanship and truth, feeling and objectivity? How apply all this to the next step, and so on? Once this subject of how to study sensibly every day is explored, we discover a rich field of occasions to build up valuable habits.<sup>1</sup>

Another such field is that of socialized study. Instead of regarding education as a matter of each child's learning out of a book for himself and then reciting as an individual, modern schooling has been experimenting with the possibilities in pooled effort. Children work together fruitfully to produce a school paper, run athletic teams, stage a play, cultivate a garden. Why not work

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<sup>1</sup> See Bessie W. Stillman, *Training Children to Study* (D. C. Heath & Co.). This book is the outcome of work in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades of the Ethical Culture School, New York.

## LEARNING BY DOING

together when it comes to learning history or science? If boys and girls are benefited by doing teamwork in the extra-curricular activities, there is every reason why the conduct of the "regular studies" too should do its part to build habits essential to democratic citizenship. The children are helped by feeling a genuine responsibility for getting the school paper out on time and making a good job of it. Why not tap these motives and apply them to the mastering of the usual studies? Everything asserted for the moral values in coöperative experiences holds true here as well. The socialized recitation, cleaned of its extravagances and kept to its due place in the school life, offers many a promise.<sup>1</sup>

### SOCIAL SERVICES

Our aim in all this is to get the practices without which there can be little, if indeed any, understanding of moral meanings. Without the doing, words like "responsibility" or "faithfulness" are too apt to remain mere words. For the same reason nothing can so develop affection for a person or a group as to perform a single willing service. Parents as a rule are more deeply attached to their children than children to fathers and mothers because parents spend themselves all through the years for the sake of their boys and girls. The people who care most for their communities are those who have developed in themselves the habit of dependable giving to their communities.

Innumerable chances to cultivate this spirit arise in the life of the school. These may consist of personal acts of kindness to pupils in sickness or other trouble,

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<sup>1</sup> For a masterly study of this problem see V. T. Thayer, *The Passing of the Recitation* (D. C. Heath & Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

or such varied services as conducting a lost-and-found bureau, or supplying flowers for classrooms or assembly hall, or selling bonds to finance the erection of a new building. One class in typewriting in a certain school got the reputation for cheerful readiness in pinch-hitting. It helped out whenever the office was particularly busy; it typed and multigraphed poems or other selections that pupils in the literature or other classes desired especially. In another school an unsightly ravine close by was transformed into a skating rink. A trench was dug that flooded the ravine with water. When the water froze, the older boys watched over the skating of the younger children. Seeing danger to some of the youngsters, they built and directed a toboggan slide where fun could be had in safety. Many a school can tell the story of how eagerly the children cleaned up the surroundings, planted trees, shrubs and flowers, and transformed the place into a serviceable playground or a spot of beauty. Most important is what the children themselves get from rendering this service.

In more than one school, opening days used to be a torment for the newcomers. They were sent on fools' errands by the older pupils, hazed, or otherwise rendered unhappy. Often no little ingenuity was spent in devising more hilarious ways of making these opening days interesting. But it certainly takes no less brains to devise ways of treating the new pupils courteously, and making them feel on their very first entrance that the school stands for good will. Where a school has already worked out a list of the duties of student reception committees (some have excellent handbooks printed by the pupils), it will put new life into the system to have an occasional conference for revisions and additions.

## LEARNING BY DOING

Outside the school also are many outlets for altruistic impulses. To mention making toys, candies, jellies, cookies, books, for children in hospitals or orphanages, making layettes, selling Red Cross seals will suggest to the reader other such chances. In one suburb, a new community health center was short of several thousand dollars to pay its year's expenses. In a few weeks the pupils in the schools got the sum raised. The Junior Red Cross is doing a valuable piece of work in getting children to do more than contribute money when famine or earthquake hits China or Japan. Exchanging portfolios with children in various countries makes for better international acquaintance. These samples of school work help the children to understand how other boys live, how they work and play, how they too feel about their countries. They are stimulated to put their best work into the folios, for they know that America is judged by these samples. Here is a chance for the teacher to bring home the idea that competition between land and land need not be in the size of armaments, but infinitely better, in excellent work. Superiority in arms brings hurt. Excelling in the arts of peace benefits everybody the world over.

## ATHLETICS

Long before the project method became a feature of modern schooling, the moral values in games and athletics were understood. Familiar as these values might be supposed to be, from time to time they need holding up to the light. In athletics, as elsewhere, everything depends upon the spirit in which the activities are conducted. A new teacher in a certain school noticed that the pupils had been badly infected with the very common

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

peril in athletics, the desire to win at any cost. He began to clean things up drastically. Every time a team cheated or played in any way unfairly, he forfeited the game to the opponents. The pupils were at first dismayed. Inside of a year, however, the new director had persuaded most of them that it was far more fun to play the game fairly.

Most of the evils from school up to college, or rather, from college down, can be traced to the overweening desire for victory first and last. A director in one high school gave his pupils much to think about in the attitude that he induced them to take toward unfairness on the part of an opposing team. The visiting basketball team had kept among its numbers a star player whom the rules counted ineligible. On the day when the two teams met for the final tournament, the home group decided that now was the time to expose the visitors. The coach, however, called his team together, and after an animated heart-to-heart talk, the boys arrived at this decision: unfair as it was for their opponents to put the ineligible man on the floor, it would scarcely be a sporting thing for the home team to bar him at this late hour and so make sure of upsetting the morale of their opponents. The question of eligibility could be taken up later.

The good to be obtained from athletics depends also in large measure upon the standards set by the community behind the team. In an earlier chapter reference was made to the moral influence exerted by community opinion. There are towns where the pressure, for example, of local business sentiment works decidedly against the better athletic standards. Some towns think of a basketball team as a good way of advertising the city—if it

## LEARNING BY DOING

wins. Money is spent freely to send the team from place to place, to provide schooling for questionable members, to insure victories. A superintendent in one city who insisted upon the great difference between high-school athletics and professional baseball found himself at odds with some of the most influential members of the local chamber of commerce. His plight is not altogether exceptional. The remedy requires enough influential people in the community to appreciate the true moral values to be sought from athletics.

It is fortunate that this whole matter of the best reasons for athletic pursuits is now being aired. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published in 1929 a report, "American College Athletics," which condemned unsparingly many a widespread practice. It showed, among other facts, how many colleges circumvented the rules designed to prevent professionalism. As a result much discussion has been aroused over the question whether this kind of dishonesty is necessary, and if so, to what fundamental reasons it is due.

The trouble lies of course in regarding college athletics as primarily a business for the entertainment of the spectators rather than for the development of the participants. Football has become professional entertainment. It has also become a business. Railroads, hotels, restaurants, shops, all have an interest now. College presidents have felt themselves obliged to shut their eyes to doubtful practices because of the need to get money from alumni; and football unfortunately happens to be the one college activity in which the greatest number of the wealthy graduates are interested.

For this reason, there are some who have proposed that college athletics be made frankly professional, that the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

athletes be not recruited from the student body at all but from paid professionals above the average age of the undergraduate, that a football team be on the same basis as any of the professional baseball teams in the major leagues. Whether or not this proposal is taken seriously, the main concern will have to be to change athletics from a business into the sport it was intended to be—and a sport for everybody, not just the few.<sup>1</sup>

The further pity is that the evils of college athletics have made their way down into the high schools. Once upon a time high-school students never thought of getting their pictures in the newspapers for athletic achievements or receiving clothes or other supplies gratis from local tradesmen. Now they are as eager for this as the lads at college. Once there was no suspicion of professionalism. Now this too has appeared. Once there was no thought of using the athletics to boost the town, or of conducting it on so expensive a scale as to need support from interested business men. Now in more than one community these methods have been making trouble. The situation can be cleaned up by courageous insistence that the athletics be kept to its main purpose.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Athletics is not the only activity that is diverted from its best purpose and in which questionable practices appear. There may be dishonesty, for example, in any kind of exhibition, whether it be art work, manual work, or dramatics. Debates may be as much overcoached as football. Dramatics may attempt to imitate professional

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<sup>1</sup> The Carnegie Foundation *Bulletin* 26, 1931, draws a brighter picture. Evidently the publication of *Bulletin* 23 produced effects in some colleges.

## LEARNING BY DOING

performances. Star pupils may be featured to the neglect of others who are more in need of the moral opportunities offered by dramatics. A school paper may, for purposes of exhibition outside, receive more work from the teachers in charge than from the pupils. All these practices are due to the one error: they lose sight of the moral values that are the best reasons for giving these activities any place in the school life at all.

This consideration must be kept clear all along the line. Although the toy wagon that a child makes with his own hands shows up poorly by the side of the ones sold in the stores, our major concern is not the product but what happens to the producer. What changes for the better is the activity effecting in him? Therefore, whereas the school is opposed to careless, slapdash work, it should be equally opposed to attempting the professional finish which in extreme form we see in the over-coaching of the university football team. And even more so in all the precollege years. Children must be allowed to grow at their own rate; and many a crude performance must be permitted at ten that we would not tolerate at sixteen or twenty.

Hence instead of thinking of the school newspaper in terms of the showing it will make alongside of papers from other schools where the finished product may represent more teacher than pupil, let the paper be first of all an honest attempt to provide the children with a chance to do teamwork, to encourage self-expression, to foster school spirit, to teach what is really significant news, and so on. That it will not feature the star pupils goes without saying. For purposes of exhibition, the chief pride ought to lie in showing how the quality of the work as a whole is growing better. Genuine teachers

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

are always interested in knowing how results are actually achieved behind the scenes. Their first concern is what the getting of these results does to all, and not just one or two, of the pupils.

So in dramatics. Teachers and parents wise enough to distinguish between dramatics as quasi-professional entertainment for the spectators and as a process in child growth, have many a complaint: "Good show, but worth all that trouble?" "Another one of those wasteful extras." "Stunt put over by tired teachers." School dramatics must not be a competition with Broadway or Hollywood, or a preparation for these. It should be as workmanlike as any other product expected at any one stage of a child's life. But essentially it should be the outcome of what the children are already doing in the given studies. It should be the flowering of their natural dramatic impulses as these find opportunity in the literature periods, the history, the science, the gymnastics, the music hours. The specially gifted can form a club of their own for putting on the big annual event. But for the school as a whole, dramatics for every possible participant is as necessary as for everybody to get the health and the good sportsmanship that some departments of athletics forget.

## SELF-GOVERNMENT

Children's organizations for play are self-governing. It is through obedience to the rules of the game that they get their first understanding of democratic government. The principle is now widely extended to other concerns of the school life than games. The project, or activity, method is an example. So is the widespread experimenting with various kinds of self-governing schemes.

## LEARNING BY DOING

There are schools and colleges that have tried this method and given it up. Reports of its usefulness vary from enthusiastic endorsement to withering disgust. But it is characteristic that quite the same attitudes can be observed with respect to our adult democracy as a whole. Many European countries have turned to dictators to save them; and not a few Americans look with admiration upon the idea.

Perhaps it is true that an autocracy can give people security, prosperity, comfort to a greater degree than democracy can.<sup>1</sup> But there are good things that democracy alone can prosper; and the best of these, as was mentioned in earlier pages, is the chance that people get to make themselves better through voluntarily sharing, like free men and women, in the responsibilities of their groups. Whether the group be a home, a club, a trade union, or a whole country, it has certain tasks to be undertaken by all together. The chance to decide what collective business shall be attempted, to give one's utmost to promoting this, and to learn from the success or the failure, is the thing to be prized; for it is in the right using of such opportunities that personal growth is encouraged in members of democratic societies. That the results are painfully inadequate, few can deny. The shame of our politics is notorious enough. But this surely is no reason for turning our backs upon the democratic ideal. Rather would it seem to suggest the need of ever renewed and more intelligent effort to live up to the splendid promise betokened by the democratic principle.

School life offers excellent opportunities. A school in

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<sup>1</sup> Even this may be questioned. See James Bryce, *Modern Democracies* (The Macmillan Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

which there had been many serious problems of disorder became enthusiastic about a dramatic project suggested by one of the new teachers. It was the most ambitious undertaking which the school had ever set itself. Dozens of children shared in some part or other of the enterprise. It was necessary, if the event was not to be an inglorious failure, for members of the faculty to be out of their rooms frequently. The school could not hire substitutes. The result was that at the next meeting of the drama committee, the problem of discipline was brought up. The leaders saw at once how necessary it was for the classes to govern themselves. They persuaded the other pupils to see the matter in this light, and the improved behavior of the whole school made it possible for the drama project to succeed.

Wherever the idea works, it seems as if the surest guarantee of success is found in getting the more advanced pupils, the ones to whom the others look, to make the most of their leadership. The element common to both democracy and autocracy is leadership. The American admirers of the dictators are quite right in stressing the fact that the world requires leaders. They forget that the best function of the more advantaged is to train the others in learning to govern themselves.

Complete self-government is out of the question. Freedom is valuable only when it goes with responsibility for the outcome; and there are certain responsibilities which the older generation cannot turn over to the young. It is the elders, not the young, who call the school into being and keep it going. But wherever the young people can take a genuine part in sharing the responsibility, they should be encouraged to do so.

A bulletin published by Washington and Lee University

## LEARNING BY DOING

sity<sup>1</sup> tells how student organization can be used in some colleges to make the honor system a working reality. At this college a strong sentiment has been built up in favor of rigid and impartial execution of the plan. Examination rooms are free from faculty watching. Very few doors on the campus are ever locked. Personal property and college property are rarely, if ever, disturbed or stolen. Books in the library are guarded by the atmosphere created by the honor system. The coöperative store has counters where the customers make their own change out of an open money box without the intervention or notice of a salesman. The building up of a tradition like this takes time, unusual student-leadership, and hearty coöperation on the part of a faculty and other officials. The success and the failure of such attempts in other colleges and in high schools can be explained in terms of the degree to which these contributory influences are present.

Sometimes a good way to begin self-government is to have the older pupils take a certain special care of the younger. This was done in a high school where the new principal found on his arrival that the physical condition of the building spoke of serious shortcomings. The halls, the classrooms, the cafeteria were ugly and noisy, especially the basement. Control by the teachers was spasmodic. The senior class was asked for suggestions. Many members smiled knowingly as they recalled other attempts at self-government earlier in the school history. But this time nothing more was asked than suggestions of how the older pupils could look after the younger ones in the lunch rooms and the halls. The plan worked,

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<sup>1</sup> Henry L. Smith, "The 'Honor System' and Its Practical Operation."

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

and surprisingly well. Cleanliness and order became so marked that the next step was easier—to invite the students to consider how the principle could be extended to other needs and then to their own affairs.

In the main, pupils like to be trusted with responsibilities. Nothing so gives them the feel of being grown up.

The idea works with individuals. A new athletic director found as one of her problems a girl who had been considerably spoiled by her good looks and her prominence in athletics. When Betty felt particularly full of fun, she could lead the whole class into an uproariously good time with no regard for her teacher or other classes. She was elected squad captain in her class and then head of the other squad captains. The new responsibility sobered her, especially after several earnest talks from the director who took pains to show that she appreciated Betty's superabundant energy and other gifts, and convinced her that the best thing she could do for herself and the school was to turn these gifts where they belonged. Betty understood how her own squad and the school could be seriously handicapped by pranks on the part of members. If she wanted her girls to give their best, she would be obliged to give her own.

The aim is to have every child in the school so far as possible feel this need convincingly. The annual report of the superintendent of schools of Cleveland for 1926 tells how one high school put a stop of its own accord to objectionable forms of dancing.

Instead of imposing strict faculty regulations or disciplining students, committees were called from each lunch hour group, and set to work out a code of dance regulations of their own. Then before the pupils who came to dance at each period, the

## LEARNING BY DOING

appropriate committee gave a demonstration dance of how things were to be done according to their rules. If in the subsequent dancing, serious transgressions were visible, the students in charge stopped the music and gave a demonstration again of how the dancing must be done. On one occasion a school athlete stopped the music and laid down the law to the dancers in a peremptory tone that a teacher might have hesitated to use.

The incident is an admirable example of the effectiveness of discipline based on self-government, discipline which the students themselves are allowed to work out, as compared with rules applied by external force to resisting minds.

Another experience from the same school reminds us that some of the best moral fruitage of self-government is reaped when pupils who are not especially prominent are sought out for testing in new responsibilities:

A chairman of a certain committee was handling the work of his committee poorly. The executive committee had noted that a certain boy not previously regarded as good for much seemed to have turned over a new leaf, as shown by his study hall work. He was asked if he would take charge. He consented with alacrity. "No one ever asked me such a thing before," he said. "They didn't think I was worth while." The new responsibilities made a man of him. Not only did he make good on the committee, but he greatly improved his scholarship, and from a student who had the reputation of being of small account, he became one who was looked upon as exceptionally promising.

Other similarly remarkable cases could be enumerated. The characteristic merits of the plan are that instead of loading a few favored students with all the desirable tasks, the executive committee deliberately picks out students who are taking little part in school activities. It gives them one big task on which they can concentrate their energies. It takes students who have failed as yet to show what was in them, and gives them a task on which, if they do it well, they can make a record by which they will hereafter be known in the school.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### OBSTACLES TO SELF-GOVERNMENT

It would be folly to suppose that a self-government plan alone will transform a school into paradise. It does not make the work of the teachers easier. It makes it more effective, but it also makes such work harder. Perfection is impossible. The teachers themselves vary in their enthusiasm and in their skill. Teachers who handle science or literature skillfully may sometimes be much less able in their personal contacts. In some schools students resent what they call the uppishness of their officers. Some have less respect for laws passed by the student council than they have for orders from the principal (again the advocates for dictatorship seem to score). Some schools discover that their student government shows all the evils of the government of the adult community, the incompetence, the roguery, the other evils for which we have such reason to apologize. Again there may be an undue emphasis upon securing one's rights rather than upon understanding duties to the school community. Or the machinery may be too intricate. Some children may use the parliamentary machinery as opportunity for the worse tactics of the poorer type of lawyer. An elaborate parliamentary method may be a hindrance where a simple, human "talk-it-over" is much better. Parents too have been known to be not wisely critical. "What an outrage that Johnny was disciplined by a committee of which that unspeakable Jones boy was the chairman!"

The difficulties are summed up in the following report upon self-government in the Open Air Department (elementary) of the New York Ethical Culture School.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *School and Home*, November, 1928.

## LEARNING BY DOING

How far these considerations apply to high schools as well will depend in each instance upon teachers, students, community. Here is another problem on which we need the light of extended study.

There is something very fascinating to the adult in childish student government. It is so "cute" to watch the little president and the miniature organization. But as time went on we became very doubtful as to the genuine value of these class organizations.

On the one hand we studied leadership.

Here there were always two conflicting points of view. 1. We must train leaders. 2. Leaders are born, not made.

We watched. It was true that leaders were born or at least that they came to us ready made. Every teacher can recall instances of the boy or girl whom other children just naturally obeyed. "Cut it out!" and the objectionable noise subsided. "No, no, fellows, we don't do that here," and forthwith "we" didn't. "Come, girls, let's . . ." and they came. We recognized how possible it was by allying these natural leaders with the school authority to solve the problem of group control.

"But," we began to ask ourselves, "are these necessarily democratic leaders? Is democracy, then, only a matter of years? If the autocrat is near your own age and you voted for him and you obey him willingly, is the procedure democratic? What is a boss anyway? Cannot a teacher sometimes be a more democratic leader according to our definition of democracy than a child can be?" . . .

"The skillful leader does not rely on personal force; he controls his group not by dominating but by expressing it. He stimulates what is best in us. . . . The person who influences me most is not he who does great deeds but he who makes me feel I can do great deeds. Many people tell me what I ought to do and just how I ought to do it, but few have made me want to do something. Whoever has struck fire out of me, aroused me to action which I should not otherwise have taken, he has been my leader. The community leader is he who can liberate the greatest amount of energy in his community. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Follett, *The New State* (Longmans, Green & Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

We became convinced that the "born leaders" needed even more training in leadership than did the followers.

All this time we were also watching very closely the workings of our class organizations and we came to believe that an ideal so exalted, so remote, as democratic government, so alien to the childhood of the race, is unsuited to young children. . . . The democratic ideal behind the instrument is very elusive and difficult to hold before the vision even of adults—witness our political organizations, with a curious truthfulness called "machines." It was our experience that when the novelty of the class meeting had worn off, the organization settled into a mere instrument for passing laws, most of which were either restrictive or punitive. . . .

Almost any child would define student government in some terms which indicated that to him it was in large part a means of inflicting punishment upon classmates. Again we questioned ourselves, "If it be true that it is cramping to a child's growth to be surrounded by negatives and subject to severe penalties, is this evil annulled because the negatives or the penalties originate with his peers?" . . . We saw the children learn to expect that certain prominent members would carry all the responsibility of the class affairs, just as their parents acquiesced in the control of the political bosses and refrained from voting or participating in other civic obligations.

Furthermore, there were many instances when the pupils were indifferent or would have liked to abandon the control. It was often necessary to make up artificial business for a meeting. Not infrequently in the real stress of some athletic difficulty, the teams went to a teacher and begged her to take charge and secure the harmony necessary for success. It was often necessary to appeal to their pride or sense of duty to continue with a privilege which they did not desire. In many instances the legislation was not the expression of a genuine recognition of need on the part of the class.

In short, we watched them develop naturally the same evils that adults have developed in government and accept them at an early age as a necessary part of the organization which they saw their teachers sanction. We felt that the whole procedure was developing in miniature the evils which cause so many people at this period of pessimism to declare democracy a failure because it results in bribery, graft, and

## LEARNING BY DOING

bossmism. It seemed to us as reasonable to declare writing a failure because it produces yellow journalism or forgery. We affirmed that it was the application of the ideals which was unsuccessful, and that so far we have had in the world no real democracy because we are too little on the way out of the jungle. We realized that it cannot be legislated into society by a congress nor into schools by faculty vote. The thing we were watching was not democracy just because children ran it themselves; and it appeared to us poor training toward democracy to allow the children to believe that it was. . . . Yet we discerned certain elements that could be converted into instruments for valuable training in the ways of democracy and these we endeavored to perpetuate.

For the last five or six years we had no formal class organization before the middle of the seventh grade. Business which concerned the class as a whole, disciplinary measures in which they were sincerely interested, philanthropic projects at Thanksgiving and Christmas or other seasons, the relations of a particular class to other classes, and the like, were discussed in class and turned over to committees elected by the class.

We came to believe that a teacher with occasional glimpses of the ideal was a more democratic leader of these class discussions than almost any child could be, that she was more likely to discover something in which each member of the class could be superior and to bring it forward. It will take a long time to produce a society imbued with the ethical principle that one member can develop his best only by assisting what is best in all the others. We became convinced that leadership like this is not childish, but rather the highest flower of culture, an art in itself that comes only after years of effort. It seemed to us that children who have not yet become fully conscious of their own personality cannot be conscious of the personality of their classmates to the extent of seeing their budding qualities or knowing how to bring out these qualities for the good of all. We saw them too frequently fail to get the import of another child's timidly expressed suggestion and turn down to his discomfiture and their loss something which would have been of advantage to all. A certain seventh-grade class president invariably said, "That is not important," whenever she failed to get the point of remarks, many of which were excellent when interpreted by an understanding teacher. Of course on the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

other hand there were occasional expressions of beautiful insight and interpretation of one child by another for which the teacher as presiding officer would be on the alert. In our supervision of committees, games, and so on, we were continually striving to sharpen the penetration of chairmen or captains on the one hand and to guard from injury the victims of crude misunderstanding on the other. But we felt that in large meetings familiarization with skilled leadership through observation of the teacher afforded better training in democracy than did habituation to the type of procedure seen under child leaders.

Furthermore, the business which a class has to transact resembles that of a club rather than of a nation or municipality with their cumbersome machinery of government.

To transact its business successfully a club needs to follow parliamentary procedure. . . . This we tried to do, first by familiarization with correct form in the fifth and sixth grades and then in the seventh grade by detailed instruction and practice in the use of correct phrases,—in leading and in taking part from the floor. It was clearly demonstrated to the pupils that so far from being a stilted or cumbersome form, parliamentary procedure is an essential instrument for obtaining democratic recognition of the contributions of all and for securing relevant thought—remarks which “stick to the point.” This training was given in our seventh grade with considerable thoroughness and was received with enthusiasm, although we and the children realized that so complicated a subject could not be more than begun at that age.

From the foregoing it must be apparent that we gave very earnest consideration to what we realized was a somewhat radical departure from the practice in progressive schools. It was our hope that by affording much opportunity for development of original thought, initiative and social contacts, by postponing formal student organization for several years so as to avert early crystallization into some of the evils so destructive in our adult life, by habituating and training the children into the highest form of leadership that we could attain, and by equipping them with an instrument for most effective transaction of business, we were helping to make them safe and intelligent crusaders for the democratic ideal.

## LEARNING BY DOING

### THE LEADING INSPIRATIONS

All this indicates what a deal of work it takes to make self-government genuine. The whole matter is fundamentally a question of what we want young and old alike to learn to keep first in their scales of values. If the smooth running of the machinery or such prosperity as dictators are praised for promoting is the main thing, then it is infinitely sounder to put all authority into the hands of the strong people at the top. But if the fact of chief moment is to create the better personalities that people can make only for themselves through the voluntary shouldering of responsibilities, there can be no question where our choice will go. From the failures of democracy we shall be only nerved the more to work for its better results. To repeat, the greatest privilege that it offers, whether in the state or in the factory or in the home, where we can also practice it, is the chance to raise our personal stature through a better doing of our part in the shared life.

Sometimes the failure of self-government plans can be traced to excessive emphasis upon having the students keep one another from delinquency. In the long run, the positive aim is better: "See these excellent objects that our class and our school and our community, all together, are here to achieve. What can all of us do as individuals and as groups to promote them?" Then the problem of disciplining delinquents becomes the incidental (though by no means unimportant) matter that it really is. In other words, it pays to use the machinery of group activity just as far as possible for aims which the pupils readily understand to be constructive. Just as the execution of the dramatics project mentioned a

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

few pages back required the pupils to supervise their own classes in the absence of the teachers, so any excellent piece of work that they do calls for coöperation from all the members. They can then understand easily enough how delinquency is a nuisance. At the same time here is a good chance to make clear what ultimately should be the object of all treatment of delinquents, namely, fitting them to play a better part in the collective task which otherwise they retard.

Here are some instances of the use of group activities for the promotion of tangibly worth-while objects. One elementary class voted during its music period to offer a program for the old people in the County Home near the city. The children selected songs that they thought the old people would like, incidentally learning a good lesson in the courtesy born of imagining how others feel. They also voted that some were to tell stories in explanation of the songs. The enjoyment of the old people amply repaid them.

### HOW WE THOUGHT OF MAKING DISHES

"For the past two years the children of the third grade have been interested in helping a family. When the Christmas Season drew near, they wrote Mrs. B. asking how they could help. She replied suggesting milk for a baby, and toys, clothing, or books for the rest of the family. We thought it would be nice to try to help them. We made them sets of dishes, one set for each girl in the family."

The above is from an eight year old child's composition. Besides dishes, the children wanted to make other things. They spent as much time as they could during the regular class time but more time was needed, so three-fourths of the class returned in the afternoon, whenever they had a free afternoon, and worked for hours. They never seemed to get tired of the work. The result was a beautiful Christmas box. In it was a work-box for the mother, a boat and bridge for the boy, a

## LEARNING BY DOING

set of dishes for each girl, a doll house, a crib and a doll's bed for the older girls and a lovely red cart with yellow wheels and handle for the baby. Each girl was given a doll also. The large rag doll was a printed pattern on cloth which some children cut, sewed, and stuffed. The bodies of the other three were made by the class, as well as the clothes for each doll.

Then cookies cut out with different shaped cutters and stuffed dates were made, which completed the Christmas preparations. Great care was taken to pack the box so that it looked interesting and attractive.

Besides these child-made toys, the class bought a *new* garment for every member of the family and brought books, toys, and clothing from their own possessions.

The children asked permission to invite the children of "The Family" to visit them here at school.<sup>1</sup>

In another (high) school the civics class listened to a woman in charge of a day nursery where needy mothers left their children while they were at work. The class voted to assist this woman in caring for the children. The girls, two at a time, signed up to go on days most convenient to everybody. The day nursery is at best a substitute for the widows' pensions whereby the more progressive communities permit mothers to take care of their own children. But in this community the girls learned an especially valuable lesson because there was no such provision. The little charges were all foreign, Mexican, Finnish, Japanese, Negro, Italian. The girls developed a spirit of interest in these alien youngsters. They saw human qualities that had never interested them before. In some of them the interest developed into a better understanding of the children's parents.

### FRATERNITIES

It is an encouraging sign that fraternities and sororities have little place in the secondary schools of our country.

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<sup>1</sup> *School and Home*, January, 1929.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

The feeling against them is that they are fundamentally undemocratic because they draw lines of social class. Many would like to see them forbidden in the colleges, in spite of the good work done in looking after the younger students, or the incentive of group pride that they offer, and notwithstanding that friendship is of all interests the least capable of control by any other method but free choice. But these organizations represent in many colleges a tradition too old and too powerful to be displaced overnight. Our colleges from the start have been essentially aristocratic institutions.

In our high schools, however, it is the Jeffersonian rather than the Hamiltonian tradition that is represented. Secondary schools are newer and more responsive to democratic sentiment. They therefore look with more disfavor upon groupings that may tend to erect social barriers. The best way to combat such a tendency and at the same time to promote friendships is to encourage a wide variety of associations, like literary or musical clubs, where membership is based on interest and merit, rather than upon family position and other social considerations. And not least is the opportunity offered by sharing in the self-government of the school as a whole.

### VOTES FOR TEACHERS

Whether the principle of learning through doing discussed in this chapter be applied to self-government schemes or any other type of project method, it needs all enthusiasm on the part of the teachers. Self-government fails in many schools largely because the teachers are not interested. This in turn is due to the fact that such teachers themselves are not self-governed. How can

## LEARNING BY DOING

they have that vital understanding which springs from daily experience? Their task is only to execute the orders of principals and supervisors. In school and out, for many of them life becomes a matter of watch-your-step to avoid offending members of the school board or the members' wives.

Here and there enlightened business men are now trying systems of industrial representation, with workers offering their suggestions and voting on the policies of the company. They appreciate that casting a ballot on only one day of the year but being subject to the bosses' orders all the rest of the year, may be one reason why democracy so often falls short of our hopes. Representation in the shops on matters affecting the living of the workers is an important step toward making democracy more real. When we turn to the schools in America, we find there are still many where the teachers of the future citizens dare scarcely dream of living on the democratic plan. If the school is to be enthusiastic for democracy, not merely as a way of registering a vote on election day, but as a way of people's living together all the time, it cannot draw a sharp line between those who give the orders and those who carry them out. Democracy requires that those who obey the orders have a voice in deciding what the orders are to be. Many a teacher with ideas that the school could use to advantage gets little or no chance to offer them. That under such circumstances the children also come to think of good citizenship in its negative aspect of merely (and occasionally) obeying laws, is not surprising.

## CHAPTER XII

### DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

Your daily life is your temple and your religion.  
Whenever you enter it, take with you your all.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

THERE are often good reasons for doubting whether a systematic, regularly scheduled moral instruction is worth the effort it requires. Many a preacher, for instance, finds himself wondering what effects have been wrought by all his years of expounding and exhorting. He thinks of merchants in his congregation who are not conspicuous in the community for their uprightness. There are women who come to his church more or less frequently, but whom their neighbors still regard correctly as rather frivolous persons. To be sure, he can think of some instances where the lives of his parishioners have been changed for the better. But he is in doubt whether much, if any, of this effect can be honestly ascribed to his teaching. He wonders whether the fruits of all his years' preaching are not ridiculously out of proportion to the energy expended. He can sympathize with the sardonic remark of George Eliot, "After long study of ethics, men sometimes succeed in conducting themselves almost as well as before."

Such reflections come also to other people interested in character-training. Parents and teachers often entertain such doubts. They know that it is not what children or adults hear that transforms them into better people, but what they do. What good is there in lessons

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

on goodness? Skill in tennis cannot be learned out of a book or out of the most vivid talk on the subject. The much more difficult art of living comes under the same rules. "I had rather feel compunction," said Thomas à Kempis, "than understand the definition of it." He might have added that without the feeling, there could be no real understanding.

### THE NEED FOR INSTRUCTION

These are the most important of the objections urged against direct moral instruction. But they are not final. "Another subject added to the curriculum?" Yes, if the need warrants; and if the addition can be made effective. "Teachers do not care; and those who do care are unskilled." But this indicates rather that the work be left to teachers who do have the necessary enthusiasm, skill, and training. "Children may look upon the ethics as just another subject with no relation to the rest of their school work." This again is an objection not to the teaching itself but to the poorer kind. Not all graduates of high school read excellent books and plays for the rest of their lives. But this surely is no reason for dropping Shakespeare now.

In spite of the many instances where attempts to reach conduct through lectures, talks, recitations, are quite futile, much is to be said for this method *when it is employed along with all the other resources at our command*. If it is offered as a substitute for living experiences, it is not only useless but likely to do harm by associating the subject in children's minds with disgust. Life is learned by living, as the preceding chapter is intended to remind. "The issues of life are out of the heart," not out of the intellect. But these considerations

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

do not impair the case for a moral instruction which remembers what children can be expected to grasp at given stages of their lives, which is offered by skilled, inspired and inspiring teachers, which is employed in company with such other agencies as this book treats, and which is presented on regularly scheduled occasions even before the children meet crises in their experience or feel any keen desire for such instruction.

The fact is that whether or not we care to "teach morals," the need is thrust upon us by the circumstance that all the time children are already being taught, by one another and by grown-ups, deliberately or otherwise. When they hear playmates speak words of contempt about people of other religions, or social standing, or nationality, or race, they are getting ideas, unfortunately of an undesirable kind. A high-school lad was overheard remarking about his teachers to a group of admiring classmates: "I can bluff the whole bunch to a standstill, and then they want to tell me how to succeed." He too was offering moral instruction. From one another, children are constantly getting all sorts of ideas about sex. The mother who says, "I do not want my child to learn about these matters until he is older" forgets that other beings do not entertain her scruples. Children on the street, the servant in the kitchen—many people, are teaching her child every day. Boys and girls read books, look at pictures, attend talkies, read newspapers, laugh over the conduct in comic strips, hear conversations. If a child hears somebody tell gleefully how he made "easy money" by a shabby method, that child is receiving a lesson in one kind of morals. On every hand children are being taught what it would be better for them not to learn. If we ask, therefore, whether instruction in

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

ethics should be offered, we must remember that the real problem is not whether such lessons should be given or not, but rather whether useful lessons instead of hurtful ones should be offered, and also whether the teaching should come from informed and responsible people instead of the uninformed and irresponsible.

Moreover, to anticipate a common objection, children are not altogether unwilling to listen—when the lesson is not all monologue or not too lengthy or preachy. They want to know about life and how to manage it wisely. They have their more or less clear ideas of what they intend to do in the years ahead, and they are ready enough to hear counsel which they think may be of help.

Furthermore, though many of the most carefully prepared lessons, such as those sermons of the preacher, bring little result, nevertheless, what good effects do come from them are eminently worth the effort. Each one of us perhaps can recall some word that at some time or other helped him. It may have been a formal address or sermon, or it may have been a simple conversation. It may have been some recommendation that we heard in the course of a talk, possibly the advice to read a book that did exercise an influence upon our thinking and our acting. "Books that have helped me" is a topic to which our young people do not at all object. People, young and old, still advise one another what to read, what to see in the theater, and what to think. They go to the play in which a married woman eats her heart out because she is in love with a friend of her husband's. They see other plays of this type and come to think that the triangle plot is a true picture of most marriages. Is it therefore foolish or unimportant to try to convince

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

them that such a view of life is unsound? Or should we sit back and let them grow up like those children of whom Socrates spoke? "They were allowed to wander at their own free will in a sort of hope that they would light upon virtue of their own accord."

It is still reasonable therefore to hope that no matter how much the times have changed, something can still be done to help our young people inform their judgments upon vital questions of good, better, and best. Long ago this problem was raised by Plato. Socrates expresses a doubt whether virtue can be taught. Protagoras insists that it can; and in reply to the question, "Where are the teachers?" he replies, "You might as well ask, 'Who teaches Greek?'" The fact is, all men are its teachers—parents, guardians, tutors, the law, society—each and all do their part. If the influence of all these forces is so often of the mixed kind that has been mentioned, this simply means that we must do our utmost to make the wiser thinking more effective.

We should count the school a failure if in this modern world, boys and girls used an electric light without some acquaintance with the principles of science. This knowledge we do not leave to the mercy of accident. We give teachers a special training in the aims and methods. The day will come when we shall have far more teachers than at present, specially trained to guide young people on principles even more fundamental than knowing how atoms behave, namely, the business of right behavior for human beings.

Students of the history of philosophy are aware how certain periods are more friendly to one or another way of looking out over life. After Rousseau's emphasis on feeling, came Kant's reason and then Schopenhauer's will.

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

Styles change in philosophy as in clothes. To-day it is fashionable in some circles to disparage intellect. But "the fact that reason too often fails does not give fair ground for the hysterical conclusion that it never succeeds."<sup>1</sup>

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Some twenty-five years ago, educational circles were discussing the problem of "formal discipline" or how far, if at all, a training in one specific activity could be expected to transfer itself to other fields. To-day something of the same problem is being debated under such heads as "job analysis" and "specific objectives." It is held that every job, typist's, bricklayer's, salesman's, can be analyzed into all its constituent details and that a specific training can and should be given in each one of these parts. By analogy, it is argued, we can train for character only when we provide training in the highly specific acts in which character operates. Right conduct cannot be an empty generalization but must express itself in quite specific deeds.

For like reasons, objection is raised to general courses in rhetoric, on the ground that the only useful training in composition comes from writing good English in history, mathematics, and all the other academic assignments. So, too, people can be truthful in some matters and in others unreliable. Athletes may have a conscience about fair play to opponents but very little with regard to honesty in classwork. Some persons are very punctual in certain appointments but not in others. So goes the story of specific behaviors. Human lives are a patch-work. None is complete. We differ only in the degree

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism* (The Macmillan Co.), p. 69.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

to which our various kinds of moral practice spread over into more than one type of conduct.

Hence the plea that character be analyzed into the most specific traits and activities and that moral help be the most definite training in each of these.<sup>1</sup> Translation into practice is surely necessary; and practice is always in some particular situation. But the importance of this need should not blind us to the equal importance of ideals or general ideas.

Let us look again at an analogy from another field. When we teach grammar, we expect very specific applications. A child accustomed to put the pronoun of the first person first is taught to make the subject of his sentence the more polite "you and I." He masters this and then is heard to say "between you and I." To correct him and train him on every preposition and on every other occasion to use the objective case, is poor economy. Experience tells us that if he has any mind at all, it pays to try to teach him the rule. A rule can be imposed from without and be offered as a substitute for thinking. But it can also be offered as a short cut to those who care to use it. This is the function of proverbs or other results of long experience. When children have been discussing specific problems of honorable conduct, it surely does no harm to sum up with the word of the Persian poet Sadi, "I never knew a man lost on a straight road."

That such general principles or ideals are as much a matter of feeling as they are of understanding, does not

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<sup>1</sup> See F. Bobbitt, *How to Make a Curriculum* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), Ch. vii; W. W. Charters, *Curriculum Construction* (The Macmillan Co.), Chs. iv, v; Charters, *Teaching of Ideals* (The Macmillan Co.), Chs. i-vi. In reply see B. H. Bode, *Modern Educational Theories* (The Macmillan Co.), Chs. iv, v, ix, xiii.

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

make the latter any less important. Both are needed. In the World War, the men in the army had to be trained for specific acts, which became more or less automatic. Some of these acts were an exceedingly minute portion of the entire work of an army. Yet it was found that even if these small bits were to be done effectively, the soldier had to have his morale stimulated. That is, he needed a moving sense of the larger task of which the specific acts from day to day were only a part.

Much the same applies to understanding the significance of any conduct. We can train a boy in specific acts of courtesy. But just as soon as we can get him to grasp, for example, how the essence of courtesy is consideration for others, we can feel surer that he has less need for some one to point out all the many further applications. He can be better trusted to make these for himself. Many a lad who is honest in athletics but dishonest in his academic assignments has not had the connection between the two kinds of conduct brought home to him. This is one great function of moral instruction, trying to suggest, to interpret, to clarify ideals. Life is an endlessly varied affair, with all sorts of new situations always arising. Nobody can foresee all the many happenings to come into children's lives after they leave school. Each situation will be specific, but it will also have some connection or other with those that their schooling has tried to interpret.

There need be no conflict then between training in specific behaviors and consciousness of ideals. Each supplements the other. Ideals without conduct, to paraphrase the remark of Kant, are barren; conduct without ideals is blind.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### WHAT SHALL WE TEACH?

What then shall be taught, and how? Some of the needs of the children are immediate, others remote. Again our problem is not a choice between one or the other; both types of need must be borne in mind.

Some persons stress the importance of meeting the more immediate needs. The word of William James—not to waste a good emotion but to set it at work—comes to mind. Other things being equal, moral teaching is likely to be more effective when it is possible to get fairly immediate responses. Here is an instance from a primary class of a familiar story used with good effect.

Jack was a born questioner. Not the type of questioner seeking information but seeking to put himself in the foreground. The questions were thoughtless, often senseless, and after discussing and answering a question, often he promptly repeated it. He had been talked to, scolded, even punished at home without effect. In school he seemed to lack sensitivity to the disapprobation of classmates and teacher. One day the group listened enthralled to Kipling's "Elephant's Child." Suddenly one wee member said, "Why, Jack is just like the elephant's child filled with 'satisfable curiosity.'" For some reason this penetrated. From then on, a laughing "Elephant's Child" said to Jack in a kindly, half-amused tone stopped the useless questioning and gradually the remark had to be used less and less.

One of the most fruitful kinds of do-it-now teaching is always instruction in self-management. Stories of self-reliance, courage, persistence, are not enough. How can one make himself that kind of person? From kindergarten up through the psychology classes in the teachers' training college, there is much that pupils can carry out immediately with respect to the management of their

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

powers. The very fact that they are living together every day in school gives them no end of chances to apply what they learn about good life.

But useful as all this is, it needs a direction that cannot always be given immediate specific application. The cool head, as we saw, is as necessary for the burglar as it is for the surgeon. All the so-called virtues are instrumental to the making of excellent lives, and we want our young people to have a sense of the rich and high implications of a need like this that cannot always receive immediate expression. There are, in other words, remote ideals as well as the near ones. It is a misreading of human nature to suppose that we get no benefit from moral teaching save as there is immediate outcome. People have been known to store up grudges, like the mule in Daudet's story who waited seven years to repay his tormentor with a kick. Luckily, however, one can also cherish worthier desires which must wait long years for fulfillment.

Dr. John L. Elliott says:<sup>1</sup>

If you want to give a child an idea so that it shall be his for keeps, say it with stories. But there is one great admonition. Respect a tale for what it is and don't try to make it do what it never was meant to and never can accomplish. The story is no policeman, no day-school teacher, much less a Sunday-school teacher. It will do much of the work of all these functionaries eventually but in its own way, for it has a genius and a power of its own. But that power is limited. It is useless to tell a frightened or rebellious youngster the story of the boy who cried, "Wolf, wolf," and expect that he will never cry or lie again. It is without avail to recite the story of the heroism of David in his meeting with Goliath and look forward to immediate and heroic results. The story

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<sup>1</sup> In *School and Home*, January, 1929.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

is much more to be treated as a very small seed, planted in time and tended carefully if its fruits are to be gathered.

The seed of some of the most fundamental ideals can be sown in the minds of even the littlest children. A faithful dog will interest them before they can grasp the meaning of the greater heroism. Tell your child the story of Dog Sultan, the old shepherd dog whose master wants to send him away because he can no longer guard the sheep. Sultan has a friend, a wolf who lives in the forest, whom he consults in his great unhappiness. The wolf tells Sultan how he can prove to his master that he still has strength and usefulness and when the plan has worked out successfully and the old dog is re-established in his place, the wolf proposes that in return for his help, Sultan shall look the other way when he comes out to steal a sheep. But the old dog says, "I can't do that. To guard the sheep is my business. I will give you my place behind the stove, or my bread and milk, but my master trusts me to guard the sheep, and that's my business." Although the child may not get the full force of the story, he can glimpse the idea of faithfulness.

### METHODS

Methods of using a story must never be cut and dried. One general reminder, however, is urgently in order always. The cardinal sin to avoid is preaching. "What does this story teach?" Children in time come to object to this as heartily as they detest having some one by their side at a ball game point out why a certain hit is a good one. The teachers' own agony at hearing a joke explained should be warning enough.

This is different from discussing, as we all do, plays or books that we like or dislike. Putting our reasons into words can be a very useful exercise in clearing up underlying principles. So a discussion of a story can be steered helpfully by a skillful teacher. "Do you know people like the bird in 'The Song Sparrow'? Tell me some who have no beautiful feathers but can sing. What

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

would you advise a boy to do if he envied a brother who can play the violin?" After other suggestions have been offered, there may be no need for any formal summing up. Reading Emerson's "The Mountain and the Squirrel" will do the job.

A teacher who wished to bring home the harm in gossip saved the story until the end of the period. She had the children play the game in which the first member of the circle hears a sentence whispered which must be passed on to the next, and so on back to the beginner. Children are always amused to find how the original sentence has been changed in the course of its travels. Then the teacher told them a story from the life of St. Philip Neri. A woman confessed to him that she was guilty of spreading gossip about her neighbors. The priest counseled her to bring him a chicken but to pluck all its feathers and to scatter them along the road. When the woman brought him the chicken, St. Philip bade her retrace her steps and bring him all the feathers that she had cast to the winds.

Wherever the applications are suggested spontaneously by the pupils, all the better. Here too methods will vary. A teacher in a lower primary class had the children learn a set of verses about kind deeds. She then asked them to write slips of paper telling what kind deeds they had done during the course of the week. To prevent boasting, these were dropped unsigned into a box and then read to the entire class.

I went to the store for my mother.

I cleaned the carpet.

I washed the dishes.

I set the table for mother when she was in a hurry.

I helped my mother to wring the clothes.

I swept the floor.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

I watched the baby.

Our little kitten was caught in a trap, and I set it free.

I cleaned up the house when my sister was sick in bed.<sup>1</sup>

Some teachers make use of very simple dramatizations by the pupils. Robert has loaned a favorite book to William and finds, when it is returned, a page torn out and spots of grease on other pages. William says nothing about this. However, he wants to borrow another book. Here two pupils improvise the conversation that might follow. The other children offer improvisations that they think make for a better solution. This is a useful help in teaching manners. To understand the courtesies, most children need to see them acted out. When they discuss which way of treating the guest or behaving at table is better, it is a simple matter to direct attention to the underlying principle of kindness or respect for the rights of others.

More formal dramatizations and school assemblies offer rich opportunities here. If the children when they hear the story told are touched by the devotion of Odysseus to his home, and by the loyalty of the son and of the old servant, the acting of it is still more impressive. It is a pity that teachers are so prone to offer moral lectures. To say it with a story is a better way, and still better, with a festival, a play, or a pageant.

The case method offers many a good chance. Just as law students to-day work out the principles of the law through a study of concrete cases, so teachers can get their pupils to discuss ideals of conduct by setting them at work on specific incidents. The alert teacher will find cases everywhere, in textbooks prepared for this purpose, in clippings from the newspapers, in incidents from

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, Cleveland, 1926.

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

history and biography, and, not least important, from the experiences of the school and the community. For example, when officials investigated the sinking of the steamer *Vestris*, mentioned in Chapter I, the fact was brought out that more than once the vessel had left port overloaded. One of the officers was asked whether he had known this and if so, why he had made no mention of it. He replied, "I kept silent out of loyalty to the company." Discussion of the meaning of loyalty like this can be very spirited and helpful. This is no less true when the cases are drawn from the immediate life of the school.<sup>1</sup>

To increase the interest in these discussions, let the pupils themselves bring in stories, poems, maxims, anecdotes, items from the daily papers, especially in illustration of the more admirable principles. In the sinking of the *Vestris*, one of the incidents was the heroic rescues effected by a member of the crew. In view of the fact that people are prone to dwell upon misdeeds by persons against whom there is prejudice, this tale was all the more worth repeating because the rescuer was a negro.

A word about the conduct of the discussion. As much as possible should come from the pupils themselves. Let the teacher say little and call out as much as he can from the children. Let him wait with his own views until the children have spoken. Too often moral instruction is seriously hurt by the impatient desire of the teacher to lecture and to lay down the truth once and for all. Ideas must develop at the rate that the individual

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, DeWitt Morgan, *Case Studies* (Laidlaw & Co.). Galsworthy's play, *Loyalties*, gives the teacher of literature a further chance to discuss this problem.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

himself finds best. The kingdom of heaven is not to be won by the violence of imposed beliefs.

What we are aiming at is moral conviction, sincere attitudes, and not a more or less passive reception of a body of truths. It is much better to let boys and girls stand up stoutly for their own opinions, howsoever wrong we think them, than to stop the discussion. A dogmatic silencing may stop the expression but not the thinking. When a boy believes that nobody is harmed by cheating at examinations and is not allowed to have his say, he justifies himself in silence. If he speaks up, objections that otherwise might never come out in public get the airing they need.

Particularly is this true in adolescence. Pupils declare that their teachers blink the facts. We shall never steer youth through its disillusionments unless we are willing to look the case for cynicism, let us say, squarely in the face. At many points the only answer a teacher can give is, "I myself do not know either. Here is a problem on which all of us need more light. Meanwhile here is a point of view that may perhaps offer you a certain help."

Where such situations arise, teachers can try to leave their pupils with at least two clear leadings. One is that however baffled at any point our quest of the truth may be, the great need is to keep strong and earnest the desire to continue the quest. Contributions to the world's moral knowledge are still in the making. Some problems, like the evil of slavery, have been settled. Some, like change in our economic order or the total abolition of war, still need to be worked out. In the second place, what counts is the desire to find right solutions, and not merely easy ones. It makes all the difference in the world whether we are looking for immediate, practicable

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

solutions, or those more comprehensive dealings that deserve the august characterization, ethical or right. The sex problem, as was mentioned in Chapter III, is one instance where undue stress is apt to be laid on individual "happiness," to the neglect of more consequential matters. Nothing less than the best interests of all concerned should be the aim.

Great care must be used to avoid a common pitfall. There is always danger of turning an ethics lesson into an exercise in hair-splitting. Some pupils love to argue for the sheer fun of talking or of opposing the teacher. A discussion should never degenerate into a debate over the question of why we should do what is right. Every normal human being, we must assume at the outset, wants to do right; and the lessons are to be understood as an attempt, not to prove this axiom but only to find enlightenment on what is right in the specific situation and how this can be reached. If, for instance, the subject is labor, let us take it for granted that men and women want to deal justly and that our discussion of the labor problem is intended to find what actually is just, why this is hard to achieve, and how it may be attempted.

Cases for discussion group themselves under three large heads. Some are the horrible examples. These should be used sparingly. A second group will consider debatable issues. One class spent a lively period discussing a newspaper incident about a judge who sat in cases of violation of the traffic laws and who had had a child of his own killed by a speeder. Was it just for such a person to deal with other offenders? The case gave an excellent chance to bring out many important principles.

The best type of case is that which holds up positive

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

ideals. Morality is not a string of don'ts. It is a way of building up excellent lives. The more vivid we can make the pictures of such admirable living the better. Here literature and biography offer great help.

### MAKE GOODNESS ATTRACTIVE

All of us tend to grow in the likeness of the behaviors on which we fix our attention. There is deep truth in Hawthorne's allegory, "The Great Stone Face." The boy who was found to be the man to fulfill the prophecy in the story was Ernest, whose life had been shaped along the noble lines of the mountain image at which he had gazed so thoughtfully through all the years. "Can a man help becoming like that with which he holds reverent converse?"

If anything else were needed to remind us how necessary it is to stress the positive appeal, we should find it in the reflection that nothing so effectively repels as the idea that morality is only a kill-joy, always forbidding something, and making life generally disagreeable for the young and warm-blooded. The Pied Piper drew the children after him because he piped. The tale would have been different if he had scolded or preached.

From all youths, dear to the gods, in whose blood the spring flames, "wintry negativity," as William James called it, meets with negation. The only point of view to which they can possibly be persuaded to repair is one which promises them some positive object for their expansive and creative energies; some better, more expeditious, route to a felicity of which they have already tasted the sweetness; some glory so unmistakable that the difficulty of compassing it will not seem altogether "not worth while." To their sense, a day passed in positive achievement is better than a thousand years of renunciation, and a man who will show them how to paint grasshoppers

## DIRECT MORAL INSTRUCTION

perfectly is a far more grateful counsellor than a prophet who dissuades them from taking a city.<sup>1</sup>

This matter has already been considered in the pages on the "expulsive power of the higher affection." Teachers especially—more perhaps than parents or social workers—are tempted to forget this. It is true indeed that people must more than once be dissuaded from taking the city and persuaded to rule their spirits. But the fruits of so doing must be kept in the foreground. What gives renunciation its bad name is letting the mind dwell on what one must surrender, for the capturing of the city is terribly fascinating. Put the major emphasis on what it is that is gained.

When, therefore, we are asked to put by the lower objects, it must be by winning all possible affection for the better ones. The athlete accepts the renunciations and exercise prescribed by his trainer because he wants the success to which these are indispensable. The pianist cannot excel without practice and without rejecting delights that interfere with the practice. When Richard Byrd announced that he was planning a polar expedition, he was flooded with applications from men and boys who wished to go along. He had to select rigidly. Physical stamina was of course essential. But no less important were traits of character: "Every leader knows that hardship and suffering are bound to arise. The effect of this suffering on each of his men is what he would give his bottom dollar to know before he leaves home."

Suppose that among these applicants, there was a man to whom Byrd said, "I may take you along. Here is a course of training that you must follow for a whole

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<sup>1</sup> S. P. Sherman in *New York Herald-Tribune—Books*, Oct. 19, 1924.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

year." It is conceivable that there might be days when the man would look upon this regimen as a hardship and object to the inhibitions. If he did, most of our youth would call him an unspeakable fool. They would be thinking of the glory of accompanying Byrd.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LITERATURE AND ART

Who takes of Beauty wine and daily bread,  
Will know no lack when bitter years are lean.

DAVID MORTON

ARNOLD BENNETT tells a parable about a man who every day studied pages in a manual of carpentry but in whose home there were no tables, or shelves, or closets—only orange boxes and a few very rickety chairs. Visited one day by a friend, he was asked, “Why don’t you put your manual to use and make some furniture?” He replied loftily, “I am a student.”

Mr. Bennett was thinking of the sore need to put into practice what is told in books on psychology. The parable hits just as truly the other subjects taught in the classroom. They have better uses than merely getting promotion or a degree, and not necessarily the “practical” uses. A study is helpful if it fills a life with some enriching interest. It is most useful when such interests are worked over into high-grade ethical personality.

In many rooms, remembering this would assuredly make a great difference. Much teaching is utterly dead because the instructors themselves have no keen sense of where their efforts become most important. They need to feel “in their hearts” a better reason for teaching the given subjects than the mere fact that these happen to be set down in the school syllabus. Literacy, for instance, is better than ignorance. A Chinese sage declared, “When letters were invented, the world below

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

wept, and the heavens above rained down ripe grain for joy." But the reading done by many a graduate of high school or college makes us doubt this.

An elevated conception of the opportunities of the school will inspire the day's work with new life. Curriculum is Latin for chariot. It pays to keep asking just where the chariot is expected to take its riders. If the journey itself is a delight, we may more confidently expect that as adults our pupils will enjoy further trips in the arts, in history, in science. If in addition, the journey brings them to some deeper understanding of a life-truth and to a better application in practice, all the better.

For this reason we shall examine the ethical opportunities that lie at hand in teaching the given subjects. Many schools prefer this method to a scheduled moral instruction. It avoids adding one more subject to a curriculum for which there are sometimes more applicants than room. It runs less danger of seeming to be just another (and an isolated) academic subject. Until more teachers are trained to employ the direct method properly, this way will probably be found the more practicable approach for to-day.

### THE ART STUDIES

What should be the function of the literature, the music, and the other arts studied in our schools? A gifted critic put the thought in these eloquent words.<sup>1</sup>

We, too, entertain, we ordinary puritanical Americans, some shadowy notions of a time, when, at more frequent intervals than now, men shall draw in a delighted breath and cry, "Oh,

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<sup>1</sup> From Stuart P. Sherman, *The Genius of America* (Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 19.

## LITERATURE AND ART

that this moment might endure forever!" We believe in this far-off time, because, at least once or twice in a lifetime, each of us experiences such a moment, or, feeling the wind of its retreating wing, knows that it has just gone by. It may have been in the spellbound glow of some magical sunset, or at the sound of a solemn music, or in the sudden apprehension of a long sought truth, or at the thrill and tightening of resolution in some crisis, or in the presence of some fair marble image of a thought that keeps its beauty and serenity while we fret and fade. It may even have been at some vision, seen in the multitude of business, of a new republic revealed to the traveling imagination, like a shining city set on a hill in the flash of a midnight storm. Till life itself yields such moments less charily, it is incumbent upon the artist to send them as often as he can.

It is not as easy to promote this function in all of our schools as to teach arithmetic or reading. The community stands back of the school in the arithmetic teaching because of a firm conviction that arithmetical skill is highly desirable. Nor is there much doubt anywhere that ability to read print is essential. But there is no such hearty and unanimous conviction that it is necessary to love great literature. Indeed many a parent, many a pillar of the community, nay, even many a school board member feels that the love of literature is something feminine and weak, not exactly the thing for future red-bloods. Many such are not only content to be "low-brows," but proud of the fact that they read only the sport pages and the stock reports. Did not the most successful, perhaps most widely admired, manufacturer in all these United States, declare in public that painting, sculpture, music were to be classed with history as "bunk"? If he had managed to reach his solid eminence without the aid of these trivialities, what could any level-headed person possibly say for them? Much of the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

work of teaching the art studies must be done, therefore, in the face of indifference to the claims of culture, if not in more or less open contempt.

Here is the place for the good work now done in many communities to be pushed further. Let the school assert its leadership boldly. The highest values, even in a commercial civilization, are matters not of size but of quality. Pictures, novels, poems are prized for their beauty, not for their length or their cost. It is possible that Shakespeare's vocabulary may have been larger than that of other fellow-dramatists whom we read with less delight, but what he did with his word treasury is the thing of importance. Beauty is first and last a matter of quality. The hunger for it is a taste for superiorities that cannot be expressed in numbers.

Once it was thought that such a love must be essentially aristocratic. In ancient Athens, the gentlemen who admired the tragedies of Sophocles utterly scorned the diggers and masons whose labors erected the theater. Nobody cared whether or not these slaves got any joy from the proportions of the temple colonnade or the rhythms of the choral dance. These inferior beings were obliged to work and to leave æsthetic gratification to those of the aristocratic class, whom their toil enabled to live in leisure.

Such a divorce has long been true elsewhere than in Greece. But it does not follow that beauty must always be for those who are exempt from labor. Democracy need not, and must not, be ugly. If America is as yet less advanced æsthetically than Europe, it is because it is a younger land, still a wilderness centuries after Europe had been civilized, and because its one century and a half of national existence happens to have been

## LITERATURE AND ART

also the new age of machinery, the age which everywhere, not here alone, has tended thus far to put a premium on large output rather than on beauty.

But democracy and beauty are not inherently alien. The machine age is still fairly new. Wallpaper made by machinery can be as beautiful as handmade. Music distributed over the radio need not be cheap. The hope of a better participation in the inspirations of beauty is spreading. Contrast the school buildings erected to-day with the ugly structures that satisfied a former generation. Why may not the influence of beauty irradiate everywhere the lives of all men and women, their homes, their furniture, their dress, the streets they walk, the schools their children attend, the parks, the theaters, nay, even the workshops, the whole material setting of their lives? We believe in democracy. Its faith in the latent excellence of the common man is our abiding hope. There is every reason then why the setting in which the jewel of democracy is placed should be in keeping with the gem itself. No desire to be practical and to economize should make our schools curtail their efforts to promote love of poetry, music, and the other arts. Nay, we can still do much more than we have already done. Within and without the school, everything that feeds and elevates the taste for beauty should be encouraged. The surroundings that Plato desired for the selected few who were to be the guardians of his ideal commonwealth are no less the moral need of all children in the world to-day.

Fortunately we can already count upon a certain love of beauty in every normal child. Even in the commonest types of theater, among the vaudeville numbers, one may hear a beautiful piano solo that the audience takes with

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

warm appreciation. Other numbers may possess genuine artistic merit and be received at least as heartily as the poorer stuff. Moreover, many schools have long demonstrated how possible it is for children to love first-rate literature. Oldtimers will recall the atrocities perpetrated in the name of elocution. It was once supposed that beginners could learn to read only by spelling out sentences like "The cat can catch the rat." To-day these first readers tell the children good stories in good English. Even in the first year, the little people learn poems by artists like Stevenson and Rossetti. They have no more difficulty in understanding excellent poems and stories than children of earlier days had in learning the inane, and they certainly are no less glad.

Once upon a time, high-school students celebrated Class Day by producing a mock trial, a burlesque debate, or a comic version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Now they put on the very best of plays and write good plays of their own. The same story might be told of music. America, it may be news for some critics to hear, now supports orchestras equal to the best in Europe. Student orchestras playing high-grade music are increasing. So are the modern descendants of the funny town bands of earlier days. Give America time, and the old jibe that the American has no art in him will lose its point.

The ethical importance of promoting such progress is simply that the objects with which people busy themselves leave their effects upon personality. People can be tremendously busy with things which, in the long retrospect of thinking men and women, are trifles; or they can be busy with those that make them bigger and finer human souls.

## LITERATURE AND ART

Years are not life,  
Years are the shells of life,  
and empty shells  
When they hold only days, and  
days, and days.<sup>1</sup>

What counts is the kind of world we carry with us wherever we live and work. It may be a mean, petty, cramped and infinitely little world, filled with occupations that pass and leave us at best no better for their contact; or it may be a large and noble world, where beauty, truth, high worships, and fine fidelities are the goods most prized. To cultivate the feeling for beauty is to heighten our sense that these differences of value are important. Beauty is indeed a joy forever. But reflective minds can make of it even more. They can find in it endless inspiration to transform what is low on the scale of spiritual value toward the far-off image of the highest.

### LITERATURE

It must not be supposed, however, that plays or poems or stories are to be selected chiefly because they convey a moral lesson. Good literature can stand on its own feet. Quite as an excellent painting needs to carry no advertising to make it worth looking at, so an enjoyable piece of literature has its important place in the day's teaching, even though we should be puzzled to find in it any special moral value. A highly conscientious kindergartner felt called upon in the first year of her teaching to let no chance for a moral lesson escape. The class was learning "Humpty-Dumpty"; and she used the occasion to impress upon the children that whether they sat

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<sup>1</sup> Edward A. Robinson, *Tristram* (The Macmillan Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

upon walls or upon their little chairs, they must always sit up straight.

So many offenses against art or plain, good sense are committed in the name of morals that teachers of literature properly shrink from becoming accomplices. The experience of Mark Twain in the Sunday school conveys another warning:<sup>1</sup>

In that school they had slender oblong blue pasteboard tickets, each with a verse from the Testament printed on it, and you could get a blue ticket by reciting two verses. By reciting five verses you could get three blue tickets, and you could trade these at the bookcase and borrow a book for a week. I was under Mr. Richmond's spiritual care every now and then for two or three years, and he was never hard upon me. I always recited the same five verses every Sunday. He was always satisfied with the performance. He never seemed to notice that these were the same five foolish virgins that he had been hearing about every Sunday for months. I always got my tickets and exchanged them for a book. They were pretty dreary books, for there was not a bad boy in the entire bookcase. They were *all* good boys and good girls and drearily uninteresting; but they were better society than none, and I was glad to have their company and disapprove of it.

There is no moral value where the children feel like that. On the contrary, more than once it is the dullness of the good that makes the wicked attractive. To be morally effective—and no less to be worthy of the name literature—the work must touch the feelings. “Your poet is the monarch,” said Sir Philip Sidney; “for he doth not only show the way but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter it.”

Sometimes, therefore, a teacher need say little or nothing to enforce the moral point. Let the pupils

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<sup>1</sup> From Mark Twain's *Autobiography* (Harper & Bros.), pp. 214-215.

## LITERATURE AND ART

heartily enjoy what they read. Use every resource, dramatizations, vivid reading, to make sure that this first essential in literary appreciation is attained. Where this is done, it may often be better for the teacher to refrain from any comment whatever. When the children hear a fairy tale well told, the way of telling is enough. "The Frog Prince" does not need a sermon on keeping promises. The tones of the teacher's voice are enough to indicate the seriousness of the king's reminder to his daughter that though fidelity may be distasteful, a pledged word must be kept.

Moralizing is only too apt to defeat its own object. The children can feel for themselves that Sidney Carton was a drunkard and to be pitied. Rarely is it necessary, when the author has done his work well, for the teacher to emphasize the villainy of any villain. Children who enjoy *Ivanhoe* will of their own accord resent the injustice with which Isaac and Rebecca were treated and admire all the more the manliness of the Black Prince. In this respect young people are no different from adults who prefer to do their own interpreting and applying. Let them commit Kipling's "If" to memory with little or no comment. It is as good as any more formal self-rating test. Something will be gained no matter how much they forget, if they remember a single thought like "keep your head when all about you."

### MORAL VALUES WITHOUT PREACHING

A suggestion here and there may be necessary, however, in order to extend the application to directions that the pupils might otherwise not make for themselves. A lad, struggling to rid himself of an ugly temper, once told his literature teacher that a remark of hers had been

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

of decided help in his life. The class had been discussing *The Man without a Country* and most of the pupils voiced their pity for Nolan. The teacher asked them whether pity was not due him long before he suffered loneliness, that is, when he let his temper go uncurbed.

A class that had enjoyed Browning's "Hervé Riel" was invited to mention other instances where a man was unspoiled by praise for a great achievement. The hearty answer came, "Lindbergh!" The topic might have been followed up by reading a poem like Tennyson's "Glory" —"Give her the glory of going on"—or by suggesting stories (for example "The Bridge Builder" from Kipling's *The Day's Work*) or biographies, illustrating deep satisfaction in the work itself with no demand for further reward.<sup>1</sup>

From the pupils' experiences in athletics, they can readily understand, with perhaps a word or two of ex-

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<sup>1</sup> The teacher's reading will supply many instances. For example: "As a refugee, a reporter, almost any kind of person, you might have been on a train that had waded miles through the Mississippi River flood, the train crews out ahead of the locomotive using poles to make sure the invisible track was still there; you might have noticed that at the end of the journey Secretary Hoover went forward and talked with the engineer. As Secretary of Commerce in charge of relief, it was his job to know more than anybody else about the flood. What he said to the engineer was to this effect:

"I hate to think what would have happened to this country without your railroad and its gang. I'm going to tell your president what I think of it all."

"He's doing a good job, isn't he?" said the engineer, adding the railroad president's surname.

"He is," said Mr. Hoover. "But I'm thinking particularly of the way you pulled us out of the water to-day with this train."

"That's my job," said the engineer.

"That is all there was of it. His job, the gang's job, the general manager's job, the president's job, and that one fine gesture as their common sign."—Garet Garrett, *The American Omen* (E. P. Dutton & Co.).

## LITERATURE AND ART

planation for some, the difference between two attitudes toward the hero of Macaulay's "Horatius." When the bridge falls and Horatius struggles in the Tiber, Tarquin wishes him to drown. Lars Porsena, who is no less an enemy but more chivalrous, wishes him safe to shore. In *The Lady of the Lake*, Roderick Dhu illustrates the same desire of the better type of combatant for a clean fight. The application to the athletic life may sometimes need to be pointed out. So, too, the manliness of John DeBrent in protecting Ellen against the soldiers whom she must pass on her way into the castle. Help is needed from the teacher to bring out other points in the chivalrous relation—for example, what Ellen for her own part does to encourage respect for the standard. Brave and independent as she is, she is always the lady.

In some instances, the teacher's interpretations will come more effectively before a poem or story is read than after. One teacher had her class discuss how the conduct of individuals or groups bears fruit for good or ill in the lives of others, and then write a composition on the topic. Then the children read Longfellow's "The Arrow and the Song" and Tennyson's "Bugle Song," with an incidental lesson on the art with which the poets gave the thought the greater beauty of concreteness.

In general, the art of the literature teacher consists in coöperating with the author as the interpreter of life. "Good fences make good neighbors," the man keeps repeating in Robert Frost's "Mending Wall." Should this be made the subject of a comparison between frontiers guarded by forts and the unfortified Canadian-American boundaries? Such a discussion is useful in its place, and something perhaps may be said on the loss that people sustain by shutting themselves up within the walls of

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

their own likes and dislikes. But this is not necessary for an appreciation of the poem. It was hardly the purpose Frost had in mind in writing it. There is moral value if the pupils are helped by the poem to understand that kind of neighbor and to share the attitude of the poet in good-humored respect for a man whose views he does not accept.

Every worthy piece of literature broadens and deepens our understanding of something important. Moral values in literature are characterized by a veteran master in these words:<sup>1</sup>

Adventure and romance, heroism and daring, the wonders and excitement of travel and exploration, or march and siege—upon these we may build. So we shall broaden his world and enlarge his sympathies, and give him a many-sided interest in all sorts and conditions of men and women. . . . We shall surround him with a cloud of witnesses to the glory of courage and nobility; we shall give him the companionship of the great and the friendship of the true and tried, to win him to their likeness.

It is good for young and old to hear occasionally “the still, sad music of humanity” recorded in such poems as Kingsley’s “The Three Fishers,” Undermeyer’s “Caliban in the Coal Mines” or collections like Gibson’s *Fires* or *Daily Bread*. Their outlooks over life can be expanded when the teacher of *Ivanhoe* takes the hundred per cent scorn of old Cedric for everything Norman as the starting point of a discussion, “Are there people like that in America now?” The teacher’s assistance is much like that of the friend who calls our attention to beauties in a painting or statue in such fashion that we see what we

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<sup>1</sup> Percival Chubb, *The Teaching of English*, revised edition (The Macmillan Co.), p. 273.

## LITERATURE AND ART

had else overlooked. Hamlin Garland's *Son of the Middle Border* and Ole Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth* tell the story of pioneers in the trans-Mississippi territories and tell it beautifully. Attention, however, may be called to the way in which both writers treat the special hardships endured by the women. The stories then become even more interesting, and surely it does no harm to be reminded of the part played in America's pioneer life by the mothers.<sup>1</sup>

In many an instance, the best fruits of the reading come only from extended discussion. *Silas Marner*, for example, is better appreciated when the pupils linger over the lights and shadows in human life revealed by Eliot's portrayals. Godfrey Cass, the weakling, is not a villain like his dishonest brother, but the harm to others from his cowardice is no less real. Nancy and Priscilla Lammeter, Molly Farron, Dolly Winthrop have their differences that are worth studying. The misanthropy of the weaver offers a case study in a frequent error, the folly of misjudging life as a whole by concentrating attention upon its uglier experiences. The humanizing influence of Eppie speaks for itself.

Adolescents are keenly interested in such problems. *King Lear* offers another typical chance to consider some of them. At this stage of life, boys and girls are conscious of ironies like the circumstance that the very steps which the old king takes "that future strife may be prevented" bring about the calamities. They are of the age when they can appreciate in the death of Cordelia the fact that suffering is not always the punishment

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<sup>1</sup> See also Bess Streeter Aldrich, *A Lantern in Her Hand* (D. Appleton & Co.).

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

meted out to wickedness. They observe the change in Lear's nature, the growth to more considerateness under the blows of misfortune. They pity him for so little understanding Cordelia as to suppose that she can deliberately speak words of affection for the purpose of "drawing a third more opulent." They can comprehend his error in supposing that he can divest himself of kingly responsibility and at the same time retain the sweets of office.

A fruitful discussion can be started by asking whether Cordelia might not have been somewhat less rigid in her replies to her father. Young people insist on being understood. Are they as ready to understand? Just because Cordelia set herself a higher code than her sisters, perhaps she might have made allowance for the fact that Lear's infirmity had been encouraged in him by all the years of flattery to a king. Might she not have done more to prevent the breach than she did in her rigid righteousness? Such character-study raises important questions. Regan and Goneril excuse their own conduct on the ground that Lear's followers disturb the household. Here is a chance to linger over a common human failing. People rarely do wrong without finding excuse. Edmond justifies his treachery on the ground that the world has no business to punish an illegitimate son for the sin of his father. A discussion of this tendency to excuse ourselves may be of much value.

Precisely because literature appeals so powerfully, it offers a good chance to clear up ideas on many a serious problem of the day. Galsworthy's *The Mob* and his *Loyalties* are excellent studies in moral courage and in the need to flood our group-attachments with light. His *Escape*—especially with its closing thought, "It's one's

## LITERATURE AND ART

decent self one can't escape"—is a wise introduction to the problem of fundamental self-respect.

The present uproar over sex is another case in point. Some of our contemporaries have not yet recovered from learning that man is still a good bit animal, and they deem it their business to shout the news from the house-tops. There is nothing so very new about the discovery. Nor is acquaintance with it necessarily defiling. The danger comes in seeing the fact out of its relationship to the essential truth that for all the animal heritage, man is human, less for what he shares with the lower orders than for what marks him off at his best and highest. Those who possess the gift of literary expression are sometimes apparently quite unaware of this fact. The moral rottenness that they dish up is no less detestable for being portrayed with high artistic skill. Men who are sensitive to shades of meaning or of color in words are not always capable of giving us life-truths finely sifted. This problem, discussed at length in the chapter on homemaking, cannot be shirked.<sup>1</sup>

A college class spent more than one eager period on the questions raised by the teacher over Hardy's *The Return of the Native*. From the problem of hasty marriage treated in this novel, the students were led on to related questions. The life and work of characters like Burns, Byron, Shelley, afford many such opportunities for discussing vital problems. There is a stage when some young people quite agree that

The world is a bundle of hay,  
Mankind are the asses who pull.

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<sup>1</sup> The problem of disillusion is treated on pp. 277ff.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

The cynicism of Byron has its echoes in the life of to-day. So has the radicalism of Shelley. The whole problem of revolt against convention needs the most sympathetic treatment. It ought not be impossible to get adolescents to understand the attitude that opposes custom in the name of progress and at the same time appreciates what is of permanent value in the custom to be displaced. Carlyle's *Essay on Burns* is an admirable study in how one can have all charity for the weaknesses of a genius without imitating them. His ringing call to look for the ideal world in one's own immediate neighborhood is always timely.

In fine, the teacher who loves joy and beauty, who understands people, who appreciates the many temptations abounding in life all around us, who does not scold but tries to give the better way of living all the advantage of superior attractiveness, can do much to help young people to discriminate for themselves and to prize both the sounder interpretations of life and the sounder practices.

### READING FOR JOY

The attitude of the teacher is important at all times but particularly when the subject is literature. Here the aim is appreciation, fundamentally a matter of feeling; and feelings, tastes, ideals, are developed by contagion. The trouble is that as the children advance through the grades, this fact is forgotten under the pressure to give each pupil grades and marks. The teaching of literature is frequently most hearty in the kindergarten. At that stage, there is no need to assign grades. Moreover, the subject is fresh and real because neither teacher nor child relies upon print. Literature there means song

## LITERATURE AND ART

and story on the lips, drama not read but acted. Literature in the kindergarten goes from the heart to the heart.

As the children grow older, the joy of the literary period is apt to be blighted by learning from a book and by the institutionalized methods of the teacher, who is now oppressed by the thought of examinations and promotions. Quite often in the eighth grade, children who once sang heartily and acted plays spontaneously will be reading *Twelfth Night* aloud as if they were reciting a list of theorems in geometry. In the high school, many a teacher imagines that the work will be successful if the pupils pass tests upon the notes and the introduction in the textbook. Although the subject is intended primarily to feed certain joys, many a pupil can be found looking up at the clock and sighing for the end of the period. One high school boy ended a composition with the significant statement, "I enjoyed this poem even though it is a literary masterpiece." Some day instead of lamenting the fact that pupils read corrupting literature, we may send them to the poorer teachers of English and compel the youngsters to take courses in the study of the dangerous writers. They may come out admirers of Tennyson and Longfellow.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES

All these occasions are open no less to the teachers of the foreign literatures. Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, especially the "Parable of the Three Rings," tells a much needed tale about respect for the unlike. *William Tell* is at least a reminder how courage, manly honesty, and the love of liberty, are no monopoly of our own country. The problems treated in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

and *Les Misérables* are as rich in moral opportunities as anything in English.

The ancient classics—not employed chiefly for the teaching of grammar but enjoyed as literature—still have their value for selected students. A study of Cicero's *Orations*, instead of being mere exercise in translation, can be made to glow with life when the teacher interests the pupils in the good and the bad political motives there portrayed—a combination that the life of to-day has not altogether outgrown. The chance to learn something about the permanent contributions of Rome to modern civilization is to be prized. Likewise of Greece.

It is a mistake to pass lightly over the reasons why cultivated minds through the centuries have found in these writings an ever fresh inspiration. Gilbert Murray's *Religio Grammatici* tells why. They deserve reading even by those who are acquainted with the ancient classics only in translation.<sup>1</sup>

In an age like our own, to be unappreciative of the greatness in other literatures than English is as parochial as to know only the town newspaper. Precisely because literature records in the most beautiful form the ideals and beliefs of greatest moment to people, there is no better opportunity to promote international understanding. When we think, to repeat, of the vivid but misleading appeal of the movies in which Englishmen are usually snobs or asses, and Frenchmen gay libertines, where Italians are gunmen and Chinese are villains or clowns, we see one of the obstacles to getting a better informed world opinion. Edmund Burke did not know the method of indicting a whole nation, but the movies do and have

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller treatment of the problem of Latin and Greek see Ch. vii in the author's *Education for Moral Growth*.

## LITERATURE AND ART

no scruple against using it. The creating of an international mind is an enormous task. The literary approach is one way to begin.

### COMPOSITION

The ethical value of composition depends upon the attitude of the writer or the speaker toward what he has to say. Language is a tool that can be used for a wide variety of purposes, some of which are morally indifferent, some base, others high, or what we will. It makes a difference, for example, whether we debate for the sake of scoring over an opponent or for the sake of bringing out truth.

Since democracy rests upon public opinion, teachers do well to have their pupils consider carefully this fact about the use of language. Just what do we mean by propaganda? What is the difference between honorable argument and tricky? It is possible to find classrooms where Mark Antony's speech in *Julius Cæsar* is held up to the pupils as worth memorizing for its oratory. It would be more helpful if the teacher used the speech to point out the devices by which Mark Antony tricks the emotions of his hearers. He is a demagogue, and he plays his game with skill. Surely, however, it is well for the pupils to see that the game itself is far from admirable.

The further connection of composition with moral values in literature is indicated by the following piece of work from a girl of ten. After Joaquin Miller's poem had been read, the children were asked to write about other people who showed the Columbus spirit. The importance of the project, as evidenced in this composition,

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

lay in getting a better grip upon the central idea by seeing it in all these many applications:

### "Sail On!"

The spirit of Columbus has lived on during the long passage of time from his age to ours. It has lived in Washington, in Lincoln, Robert Fulton, Louisa Alcott, Dr. Grenfell, Dr. Howe, and hundreds of others. It is the spirit which showed when hope was gone, when for finding a new world he got ridicule, chains, and the name of an imposter.

It is the spirit of Washington which kept him brave when defeat was impending, when armies were gone, when no food was obtainable, and hope was gone.

It is the spirit of hope for a backwoods boy, the spirit which made him learn to write on a shovel, ambition to be a better man, of courage and hopefulness.

The spirit showed when the invention of boats moving by steam was thought impossible, but it went through.

Authors have to show a great deal of the spirit of "Sail On." Often one finds oneself thrown upon the mercy of the people. Often not until after one's death, one's writings are not appreciated.

A doctor in Labrador also had hundreds of difficulties to overcome. Then "Sail On!" Another trying to prove that blind can be made to see, deaf to hear, idiots become sane, must show the spirit of, "Sail On!"

Composition offers good training in putting oneself at the point of view of other people. No composition can be a success without bearing in mind how it strikes the reader or hearer. One way of showing courtesy is to write at least legibly. Another is to make our words express our meaning clearly. Still another is to make the composition just as interesting as possible. A good host tries to spare his guests annoyance. He puts them at their ease and wishes them to find their visit fruitful. It is no less essential for the writer to place himself at the point of view of his guests.

## LITERATURE AND ART

Children know how hard it is to follow mumbling speech. They should be reminded, therefore, that it is good manners to save their readers needless effort. Still more, in order to make their words as inviting as possible, they must exercise imagination to understand how the reader is likely to take what they are saying. Writing is persuasion. Practice in it can be made part of the training in the art of seeing through the eyes of others.<sup>1</sup>

Oral composition is the teacher's golden opportunity to encourage timid souls and to correct the confident spirits who are too fond of publicity. Praise where it is needed can do much to hearten the shy; and carelessness of thought and speech requires curbing in the precipitate. For one type of child, a single year's work will be of help if it teaches him self-possession, overcoming his awkwardness, replacing his undue sensitiveness with greater confidence. Try as the teacher will to get the rest of the class to be polite and not laugh at mistakes, there is apt to be a certain residue of such conduct, which it is good training for the shy pupil to learn how to meet bravely—the best way, of course, being to improve himself. For another child the year may be equally fruitful, if it convinces him of his need for caution, for accuracy, for understanding that fluency is no substitute for knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> See Phyllis Robbins, *An Approach to Composition through Psychology* (Harvard University Press).

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SOCIAL STUDIES

I have a vision  
Of a New Republic, brighter than the sun,  
A new race, loftier faith, this land of ours  
Made over.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

#### GEOGRAPHY

**O**NCE this was quite a distinct subject. To-day it touches the natural sciences on the one hand and history and civics, the social studies, on the other. Its ethical values therefore are like those found in both these fields.

Even when geography was the old "sailor" study, a recital of interesting bits of information about foreign places, it did its part to widen people's horizons. If it was an escape from parochialism then, to-day it can be still more effective, because the world is both bigger than ever and at the same time more accessible in all its parts. A study does much when it opens people's eyes to the interest, the beauty, the wonder, to be found in the globe that they inhabit. A Japanese proverb says, "The frog in the bottom of the well does not know there is an ocean."

Geography is one of the best ways to accustom children early in life to the important idea that difference does not necessarily mean inferiority or superiority. Indeed, it can be a valuable exercise in putting ourselves at the point of view of people quite unlike us. The queer-

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

ness of things French to American eyes is matched only by the queerness of American ways to other folk. A Chinese girl in an American university, asked by her teacher how she liked our country, replied, "Very much —only the people all look alike."

Geography, like history, tells the inspiring story of man's attempts to meet fundamental problems in his life. One such is man's adjustment to his physical environment. A very thrilling tale can be told of what man has done to stamp his mind and will upon his surroundings. He clears forests, tunnels mountains, irrigates deserts, pipes water to a city a hundred miles from the springs, connects ocean with ocean by canal. An animal tormented by mosquitoes can only strike out in fury or wallow in the mud. Man gets rid of this annoyance and danger by draining the swamps.

Man has asserted his will for more than mere survival. The world's explorers from the unknown adventures of prehistoric days, through Columbus, Vasco Da Gama, to Lindbergh, Byrd, and Dr. Eckener of the Graf Zeppelin, widened the domain of knowledge. Biographies of such explorers make fascinating reading. Children should know the journals, letters, articles either by or about Livingstone, Stanley, Captain Cook, Wallace, Amundsen, Scott, Peary. Francis Younghusband's *Epic of Mt. Everest* tells an inspiring story of the three expeditions to explore the summit of the highest mountain in the world.

It is no wonder the children like to read such tales. They love the adventure and drama. The desire to see with their own eyes what lies on the other side of the hill or out there where the boats drop from sight, is at work in every healthy young life. And here is one of

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

the world's brightest hopes—something in man that refuses to accept the immediate facts as final. He tries to understand what lies back of the facts and to shape them to his own purposes. He will not let Africa stay the "dark" continent, or the polar regions remain inaccessible. This is one with the impulse that led James Watt to study the power of steam, Louis Braille to invent his raised type for the blind, and Hidei Noguchi, the Japanese bacteriologist, to track down the yellow-fever germ. Fortunate it is for the world that this spirit is operative in our children. The brilliant courage that is making over man's physical environment every year is needed. Most of all is it needed to meet the still more difficult problems of a right interrelating of people's lives. Here, too, there must be trail-blazers and road-builders.

The challenge of this uncompleted task is the best of reasons for teaching geography at all. Man has learned fairly well how to meet the obstacles raised by heat and cold, by sea or mountain or desert. He has much less reason than before to fear wolves and tigers. But he still has reason to fear his human co-occupants of the globe. Discord, suspicion, strife still operate in the relations of occupational groups, nations, and races. The very success of mankind in mastering the problems set by the physical environment makes all the more conspicuous man's failure to meet the problems set by his human surroundings. His greatest conquest is still to be exercised over himself.

The study of geography can promote this purpose by bringing home, among other facts, at least that the peoples of the world are interdependent. The implications of this truth are of prime importance to-day. The

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

most isolated happen to be the most backward. The mutual benefit from coöperation is a story that can be learned from the earliest years. The city needs the country for its food. The country has benefited from the sciences taught in the city centers of learning. Doctor, laborer, farmer, teacher, merchant, cannot get along without one another. Land needs land in more than one way, and the exchange of foods and other products is far from being the only benefit. Ideas and ideals can also be interchanged with profit.

It would therefore make a great difference to our life on this globe together if, when people looked at maps, they beheld not only the maps but in imagination the folk who live in the lands there marked. For instance, the years ahead will see closer ties between America and the Latin-American countries. American children will gain from knowing not merely the physical features of those countries, the climate, the products, and so on, but especially the history, the literature, the outlooks of the people. American travellers, able to afford a trip through the Panama Canal, have been known to stare unseeingly at the Don Quixote statue in Panama. Many know in a general way that the Latin-American countries won their independence from Spain and Portugal. Let them learn something of the biographies of the liberators, Bolivar, San Martin, Juarez.

An important task for the future is a better relationship of the more advanced peoples to the less. Many a war has been fought (or prepared) over which of the stronger countries was to rule in America, Africa, Asia. In the new day, a better relation will exist among the more advantaged themselves when they look upon the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

lands of the less privileged with an eye to something better than trade or military benefit.

It is one of the ironies of life that precisely in those lands where nature has been most bounteous in supplying gold, palm oil, or rubber the natives live in the direst of poverty, disease, and superstition. Missionaries have gone to them, with all credit. But missionaries have been so often followed by trading companies and then by the gunboats that they have more than once come to be regarded by the natives with suspicion. We read of the atrocities committed in securing rubber from the Congo and the Amazon regions;<sup>1</sup> and we can understand why Mark Twain once declared, "Man is the only animal that blushes or needs to blush." What would it mean if the superior Western people united in all honesty to put first the welfare of these backward people? These folk have their own memories and hopes, their own lives to live. Even in them is the human worth that all men are expected to honor in one another.

But when the western world thinks of these people, the statesman sees maps, frontiers, harbors; the merchant and the statistician see numbers, raw material, exports, imports; the military expert sees coaling stations. The one fact that outweighs all the others in importance is the human fact that people live there—not abstract population statistics, but men, women, children. Granted that these are ignorant, uncivilized, nay, sometimes savage. Precisely in that very fact lies the privilege of the more advanced. Whatever of humanity there may be in these backward folk is to be developed. If the rest of the world needs their products, it ought to be

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<sup>1</sup> H. A. Gibbons, *The New Map of Africa* (The Century Co.); E. D. Morel, *Red Rubber* (G. P. Putnam's Sons).

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

possible to get them by methods less brutal than heretofore, to devote the products to bettering the lot of the natives, and to offer such help not by force but by the persuasive power of friendship and example.

When the nations show themselves ready to go out to these backward lands with this welfare of the natives uppermost in mind, they will be as welcome as the medical missionaries have been in China, or our sanitary engineers in lands like Ecuador, to which they have come by invitation. And when the nations coöperate in the furthering of this joint responsibility toward the less developed, they cannot help but treat one another more like civilized beings. Husband and wife get into better relations with each other when they keep foremost how their children need from both the very best they can give. Whole homes get on better together when they unite to make their community provide properly for the community's boys and girls. Sincere attempt to bring out the hidden excellences in the less advantaged is one of the surest ways to heighten the best excellences in the superiors.

The essential thing is to be convinced that the human race as a whole has one great accomplishment to labor at—to move forward, to get ahead of itself and make itself more genuinely human. In this task, all are needed, even the backward. The world job is promoted by every honest, intelligent attempt to lift these from their backwardness. Not least is the moral gain that accrues from such united endeavors to the more developed themselves.

### HISTORY AND CIVICS

We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations, and of ages.<sup>1</sup>

These words were spoken in an age of violent change when it was easy for minds like Burke's to fear that the French Revolution was going too far. They contain a truth that still bears upon one of the central ethical problems in the teaching of the social studies. Can we teach respect for the past without shutting the mind to the need for fundamental changes?

From one point of view, history might almost be a story of the damage done by the stand-pat minds. It was not only the old régime in France that failed to read the signs of the times. The Kaisers sneered at the warnings of their radicals; the Czars packed them off to Siberia. In our own country one of the arguments against abolishing slaves was that Washington had been a slave owner. Never was there a reformer who was not declared impious for questioning a time-honored institution.

Hence there are those who want the young mind to start, as they say, unfettered by respect for the past. "Lift the dead hand." "Start afresh with a clean slate." Or, "If you teach about the past, teach how inferior and cruel it was. If a machine fails to work, scrap it. Why waste effort on adoring the makers of it?" Reason though there is for such an attitude, it is altogether too sweeping. In the first place, we cannot understand the present unless we know the past, and we cannot know the past unless we respect what was best in it. As we saw about the world's explorers, we of to-day are hugely

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Clarendon Press), p. 102.

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

in their debt. We are indebted to the men of science, and to the lovers of beauty in the past who wrote the songs, told the stories, carved the statues; we are indebted no less to the people who established the institutions under which we live to-day. Granted that, for instance, our freedom in these years is far from being all we would have it, nevertheless it represents an immense advance over the days when heretics were burned or when persons disliked by duke or baron could be secretly imprisoned and tortured. If we keep from our young people the story of the bitter labors it has cost the human race to reach to-day's levels, we deprive them of important nutriment.

In the second place, a discriminating regard for the past will prevent the mistaken idea that later ages must necessarily be better than those that went before. There are people to-day who make a god of Evolution, as if somehow the later stage could not help but be an advance over the earlier. Such a trust is quite naïve. The great gains must be worked for consciously, zealously, wisely, not expected to come out of the mere magic of newness of time. History is full of instances where a later age was worse than the age that went before. The archeologists have been uncovering the great civilizations of the East. These civilizations could not have been wrought in a day. The exquisite art objects recovered from the tombs of the ancient Egyptian kings represent a period of Egyptian civilization that must have taken centuries of progress to reach. Just as the genius of a Goethe could hardly have expressed itself in his great creations if he had not had behind him all the centuries of art and science, so these achievements of the Egyptians

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

must have come after a long growth upward from a culture much cruder.

But such civilizations, after reaching these heights, nevertheless halted. Modern Egypt has given the world nothing to compare with its ancient achievements. Modern Greece has had all the benefits of modern wisdom, but its contributions can scarcely compare with those of the age of Pericles. Later periods may be worse than those that went before. Whole civilizations have flourished, decayed and disappeared, leaving either no successors or poorer ones. Growth may be downward as well as up. Many a man has disappointed the hopes entertained for his childhood. If there is degeneration in the life of the individual, why may it not come to nations and races? There is no guarantee that their future will be better than the past except in so far as they deliberately will that such shall be, and adopt the methods to make that will effective.

Indeed, on one acute problem of our age, Raymond Fosdick goes so far as to say:<sup>1</sup>

What is this thing we call patriotism? Once a sacred flame upon the altar, it has grown into a conflagration of devastating proportions. Once a noble passion that broke down local provincialisms and stretched the mind to broader loyalties, to-day, with the expansion of international life, its tendency is to narrow rather than widen the sympathies of men. Once the issue was patriotism versus a small parochialism; now the issue is between patriotism and the enlarging fellowship of human life on the planet. Once patriotism was a unifying force that brought order among small conflicting groups; to-day, in the world-wide society of mankind it has become a disintegrating force.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Fosdick, *The Old Savage in the New Civilization* (Doubleday, Doran & Co.).

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

### HOW DEAL WITH DISILLUSION?

There would be much less of a problem if all that came from the past were worthy of unmixed admiration. This, however, is not so. The heritage is spotted. We are the heirs not only to the successes in working out right human relationships but to the failures as well. These failures meet us on every hand. No class in civics can be in touch with the realities of the subject and fail to consider where our machinery of government is defective, where our education is imperfect, where our dealings with one another in racial, national, or occupational groups are seriously bad. All the unfinished problems that constitute the great challenge to the constructive spirit of the young represent so many failures on the part of the past. It would be folly to shut our eyes to this fact about the heritage.

Nor can we, in an age of publicity like our own, shield our young people forever from the disillusionments that a study of history and biography so often bring. Many people are horrified when their children learn that some of the founders of our republic were religious radicals, deists, atheists. Thomas Jefferson, for sympathizing with the French Revolutionists, was looked upon by Federalists with the same fear and aversion as Bolsheviks in our own day. Moreover, the so-called new biography is taking the heroes off the pedestals and telling us to observe how much less heroic they really were than we had supposed. The story of Washington and the cherry tree is a myth. Other investigations tell us that the private characters of some great men of the past were mottled.

Our chief resource lies in the fact that the truth can do no harm, nay, rather that only the truth frees us.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

But it must be a fuller, more comprehending truth than the inferior kind that stops at emphasizing the flaw in the hero. When the painter sought to flatter Oliver Cromwell by omitting the wart from his portrait, Cromwell insisted upon being painted as he was. But this was different from having his face painted, as many a disillusioned student might believe the only true way, with nothing else but the blemish. That the hero had his great faults need be no startling news. Nobody is perfect. And was it the fault that gave the man his great place? The heroes of the Revolution, for example, swore, drank, indulged in other sins of the flesh, but so did other men who did not become great. Those whom disillusion makes cynical are almost as naïve as a boy who would suppose that there was nothing more to admire in Shakespeare once he had seen how poor (seemingly) was Shakespeare's handwriting. The cue for the teacher is not at all to dodge the truth but to face it frankly and interpret it.

The younger the child, of course, the less should this problem be treated at all. Roughly speaking, the beginnings of high-school life are time enough. Any attempt to draw both the lights and shadows in the portraits of Washington or Lincoln would only confuse the child. There is a stage in his life when all his admirations are quite uncritical. He needs the support it gives to believe that right always triumphs, as it does in his stories, and that his heroes are beyond reproach. He will learn in his own good time that this picture needs to be corrected; but the attempt to correct it in the earlier years will only confuse his understanding and weaken the powers that depend upon admiration. The adult literary student, in the interest of sound scholarship, must know

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

all the writings, the poorer no less than the first-rate, of Shakespeare, and Wordsworth. The child, however, should know only the best. This is the sounder scholarship for his particular stage of life.

When disillusion arrives, the treatment must be in many respects what it is when the youngsters see imperfections in their parents and other elders still living. It is folly to imagine that their eyes can be shut to the plaster in the composition of the saint. Try first to have them know what is most admirable in the mixture. Perhaps they will see how it is all the more to a man's credit that there were great things he accomplished in spite of his human failings. Since we grow chiefly by what we contemplate with the deepest interest, it is better not to be unduly taken with the frailties. In the second place, the knowledge of the evil is helpful only to the extent that it spurs us to do better. Those who really want progress will work for a future in which the greatness will be accompanied by less and less of the dross.

We have everything to gain by looking the facts steadily in the face. No evil, whether in individuals or in whole nations, is ever overcome by merely ignoring it. Nor do we show superior insight when we focus all attention upon things unlovely. The blind hero-worshipper on the one hand and the sophisticated or the cynical on the other are twins. Both oversimplify. We live in a world of men and women, not of angels or beasts; and if our problem is for this reason more difficult, it is none the less clear: the challenge remains to move our world up from bad and good (in whatever degree of mixture) to the better. Those who want their lives to count most will be neither contented nor discouraged but will con-

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

tinue to offer their best to the right working out of mankind's uncompleted tasks; they will welcome every enlightenment they can get; unweariedly they will seek more light and apply it.

What special help can be offered by those who teach the social studies?

### A BETTER AMERICA

Obviously the practical viewpoint must prevail over the merely informational. Our civics teaching, for example, though better now than it used to be, can still be improved here. Once it was a textbook study of the forms of our government. Useful as this was and still is, it forgot that in practice the ward politician knew a great deal more about the ways in which the forms of our government were actually worked than the book, or the teacher, cared (or dared) to admit. The knowledge of how a primary is organized may be used indifferently to elect the worse or the better types of officeholder. The essential thing is to understand the machinery in the light of the best uses to which it can be put, and of the will to make such uses.

Here an outstanding problem is the need, mentioned earlier, to get a higher type of brains and character in the conduct of our public affairs. Democracy must not necessarily level down in the direction of mediocrity. Thomas Carlyle warned the America of his day that to become a habitation fit for the gods, it must cease to brag of its model institutions and must gird itself for many a hard battle against cant and stupidity.

His warning still has its point. There is nothing

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

sacred or final about democracy. It is a tool that we shall use better when we remember wherein our good fortune is greatest. The hope in government by and for plain people does not lie in the size of the masses and certainly not in their plainness. It is the fact that they have minds that under democracy they can learn to use more freely and intelligently, souls they can train to act sensibly and nobly. If

Manhood needs nor rank nor gold,  
To make it noble in our eye,

then the common man must cease to remain common and make himself uncommon by looking up.

The freedom most to be sought is freedom to be our best. Among other things, let America therefore encourage in other fields the distinction and the initiative it now applauds in making money or reaching office. Let it give a more hearty admiration to the intellect of the thinker, and the creative gifts of the true artist and genuine statesman. When it does all this, when it no longer needs to have men plead for liberty of mind and spirit anywhere, when it honors more generously the character that builds on something deeper than surface show, then will America be, if not "a habitation for the gods," at least a land where men and women, by making themselves greater and better men and women, prove that the freedom they enjoy is a freedom they deserve.

### METHODS

The details constitute a large program. Practice in school self-government is one way to make the beginnings. So are the other activities mentioned in the

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

chapter on that subject, and so are all the suggestions for raising the quality of our life together. Citizenship in the broadest sense is wrapped up with all that we hold good and precious.

Here is an instance of how the interest of children in human welfare was used in their study of civics. Pupils in the eighth grade of the Brooklyn Ethical Culture School wrote the following articles and poem in their school paper:

### OUR TRIP TO THE EAST SIDE

We had been studying immigration in class, that is, how people in other countries live, and how they live when they come to this country. Since the East Side is a place where many immigrants live, it is a good place to see how they adjust themselves to a new life.

We spent a whole morning on the East Side. We saw in what filth some people live in the old tenement houses and what comfort others have in the new model apartments. Descriptions of our trip will be given in this supplement.

J. P.

### A WOMAN OF THE EAST SIDE

#### I

A basket in her hand,  
A shawl on her head,  
A tattered cloak covering her thin, bent body.  
What does she talk?  
A queer broken English.  
That's the woman of the East Side.

#### II

Her worries are many and great.  
Where will she get the money for the rent?  
Where will she get the money for their meagre supper?  
When will her husband get a job?  
All these questions and many more come to her mind.

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

### III

Her rooms, those dark three little rooms,  
Rooms oh so hard to keep clean.  
The baby always breaking something,  
And there's never any place to put anything,  
For there's never much light in those rooms,  
And never any room in those rooms.

J. S.

#### OUR VISIT TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT KITCHEN

We first went to an unemployment kitchen, not one operated by the city, but one operated by five men. The place was built on the lots where the tenement houses used to stand. These houses were torn down, and the lots are going to be made into a wide street.

An organization donated a small building that is used for a mess hall, and the men built a small house out of boxes and crates. They use this house for a kitchen where they cook the food. The men receive donations of vegetables and coffee. They have one huge caldron in the little kitchen in which they boil the vegetables. Underneath the caldron is a pit where a fire is kept going constantly. There are other caldrons in which coffee is boiled. Altogether these men feed about twenty-one hundred a day.

V. K.

It would never do to let children see only these examples of misery. They visited two settlement houses, and the poems and articles they wrote told how they caught the spirit of hope animating these places. They also visited a model apartment, of which one of them wrote:

#### VISIT TO THE MODEL APARTMENTS

As we stepped into the courtyard and saw the well-kept gardens with the fountain in the middle, we realized at once what could be done to better the living conditions of the East Side.

We entered one of the apartments, which was light and airy. The kitchen had a nice stove and clean cupboards. The man

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

who showed us around took us to the window and showed us a large building across the street, which he said the city was tearing down, and that a playground was to be built on the site.

This model apartment is only an experiment, but it shows what the East Side may be ten years from now.

B. H.

A training in fairness is another highly important civic practice. For all its faults, democracy is still a step ahead for mankind because it tries to secure joint action by persuasion rather than by compulsion. No need therefore is greater than to show due consideration for beliefs different from our own. "My antagonist," said Edmund Burke, "is my helper." A practice like the following may be found helpful. When the class is discussing a current problem—labor, let us say, or world relations—John states his views. William is burning to show how absurd John's views are. Instead, however, of firing his broadsides at once, let William first summarize accurately what John has really said. What harm people do by distorted reporting! Then let William tell what he thinks is sound in John's arguments. Then let him state his own position. Both the intermediate steps can be of high value. At the least, they introduce a salutary pause. They give the chance to see the problem somewhat more objectively. Perhaps one of our greatest needs everywhere is to learn that people whose views are different from our own are not necessarily fools or scoundrels.

History teaching ought not to exhaust itself when it has passed on a body of knowledge, though it generally does. It ought to give some training in the historian's method of inquiry. I can hear protests, not confined to manufacturers of automobiles, to the effect that they did not raise their boys to be historians. Heaven forbid! But they did, let us hope, raise them to be

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

citizens in a democracy. As such, whether they want to or not, they are going to use, and use daily, just the sort of material the historian uses. Almost all the knowledge that will come to them as citizens (to confine ourselves to that phase only) is going to be indirect, second-hand knowledge. The historian can show them how to test it. Much of the technique is simple enough for a child. Who reported the steel strike or the race riot, or the state of affairs in Italy or Russia? Was he there? Did he know enough to appreciate what was going on? Could he give a true account of what he saw or heard? Did he want to give a true account? And so on. What would a generation possessed of the *habit* of asking such questions not do to our newspapers? . . .

The votaries of history often err in assuming that these values flowed automatically from the teaching in any old way of any old thing labeled "history." Thus repeating almost verbatim the content of a textbook in ancient history at the rate of five pages a day for a year is even yet supposed to develop fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, critical-mindedness, historical-mindedness, suspended judgment, a willingness to hear both sides, sympathy, reverence, piety, a sense of development, and what not. If half the values claimed for the study of history were inevitable concomitants, we should be living in a different world from the one we are now in. But they are not inevitable. If we wish to win them for ourselves, we must go after them. If we would have our pupils win them, we must show them how to go after them.<sup>1</sup>

There is much hope in the teaching that so uses history to throw light on the need for fair and intelligent judgments. Our young can be led to see, for example, how different the French Revolution looked to sympathizers, to opponents, and to impartial, objective students. They can be directed to source material like newspapers in which North and South in the Civil War both told atrocity stories that were untrue, or grossly

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin H. Pahlow, "The New History Teaching," *The Standard*, Vol. 12, p. 105.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

exaggerated. Or they can broaden their judgment by observing what proportion other people give to events of first value to others. An American teacher had his eyes opened in England, where he saw that certain textbooks gave only a page or two to the American Revolution. Questioning whether it was not entitled to more space, he received the pleasant answer, "Why, it is only one episode in British history!" On the other hand, the main fact about America's Civil War treated in this book was the quarrel between our country and Great Britain over the blockade—surely a minimizing of more important issues in that war.

The controversy over such matters as the attempts of American textbooks to deal fairly with the British side of our Revolution has done much good. It has brought home the need to free our educational systems from the censorship exercised by persons who are quite ignorant of the methods employed by capable scholars, or who naïvely imagine that to-day's problems can all be settled by unthinking, melodramatic worship of days gone by. In a public address, David S. Muzzey called attention to one of the older texts where the account of the battle of Bunker Hill contained the statement, "For the third time the cowardly British charged up the hill." He reminded his hearers that the statement was false. The records show that the British lost more officers in that battle than in any other of the war. Besides, it evidently never occurred to the author, the teacher, or the pupils that people who charged up a hill for the third time could scarcely, on any showing, be called cowards.

Our collective life has many more problems to solve than the problem of war and peace. Warmaking at this

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

late stage in civilization is simply the outstanding illustration of how we have failed. And here the world's teachers have also an outstanding ethical opportunity. They can train the builders of the future to stamp out from their own minds the conceits and prejudices on which the war god always thrives. One person does not like Italians, another Jews. Some New Yorkers imagine that Westerners are all dull-witted farmers. Elsewhere it is a common belief that every Yankee is a hypocrite or that every business man is a capitalist with the dollar sign stamped on his stony heart. Where dislikes of this kind are harbored, little chance exists of dethroning the god of bloodshed. Those who wish to contribute something to the creating of a world fellowship can begin at once by doing a single act of friendship for some person in a group that they dislike.

Once more we are reminded of the problem treated in Chapter IV—how far our communities are willing to give the progressive spirit headway. Many are still very backward. In others, however, distinct gains have already been registered. Says Charles A. Beard:<sup>1</sup>

It is true that here and there, from time to time, a state of terrorism prevails, forcing teachers of history to surrender their minds to self-constituted custodians of morals and law. But within a continent so vast and a nation so varied in ethnic and occupational interests, there is still opportunity for play of the spirit, free inquiry into the past and present, idle curiosity flowering in initiative and daring, and some questioning about the future. And it is from the diversity of interests that all liberty—as well as creative imagination—springs, according to James Madison.

This or that party, faction, group, clique, class, profession, lodge, fraternity, and society will continue to gun for the chil-

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Beard, "History in the Public Schools," *The New Republic*, November 16, 1927.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

dren through their reading matter, but it is not at all probable that any one of them will be able to impose its will on them all. Teachers are better and more widely trained than ever, they have a larger voice in the selection of books (small as it is in many cities), they are more closely in touch with the diversified currents of world opinion, and it will become increasingly difficult to cabin and confine the electric power of thought. It is not given to the Society of Colonial Dowagers or the educational committee of the Ancient Order of the Palm and Cocoanut to baffle and defeat "right reason and the will of God."

While all these efforts at shaping instruction in history are being made by special interests, good and bad, a large body of teachers and school administrators are trying to keep their heads amid the swirl and conflict of opinions, honestly seeking to learn whatever is valuable and of good report in each particular plea, and yet primarily concerned with truth itself, convinced that the love of truth and the desire to be intelligent are more precious possessions than any segments of bigotry. All over the country our colleges, universities, and normal schools are developing courses of instruction which widen the horizon of teachers, give them a better perspective, and enable them to understand and transcend local, class, and group prejudices. The best hope for increasing intelligence in the management of instruction in public schools lies in these enlarging provisions for higher education. In spite of all the raging among the heathen, the textbooks available for grade and high-school instruction in history are constantly improving. If any one has any doubts about the advance of the past fifty years in this relation, let him or her compare W. H. Venable's *School History of the United States*, issued in 1872, with the manuals published by the reputable houses of this nation in the year of grace 1927.

### COURAGE AND PATIENCE

One other need which a good teaching of history and civics will honor is moral courage. Every blessing that the world now enjoys had its origin in the work of some individual or some minority group. It is easy to accept the benefit and to forget what is owed to the courage

## THE SOCIAL STUDIES

of the road breaker. The only self-respecting course for the recipients of the benefits is to encourage in their own day those who think they have the better offerings to give. Here school and home can be of great help. Children are ready enough to poke fun at one of their number who sees things other than they do. They need to understand how it is precisely this attitude of theirs that has strewn the road of progress with needless obstacles.

They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three.

Our hope for a better world lies ultimately in what people think. In the days before Europe embarked on its world-changing adventure in crossing the Atlantic, its people were kept close to shore far more effectively by their ignorance than any modern nation can be kept by mines and warships. The emergence of the oceanic era in history was hindered by people's beliefs about what lay beyond their shores. To-day we are restricted in similar fashion by our beliefs; we are kept from moving out into juster and nobler human relationships by what people think or feel. The fears, suspicions, prejudices, conceits that still embitter the relations of races, nations, workers and employers, and that waste good human energy in wars and preparations for war, have their roots in mistaken ideas of right and wrong.

Well may teachers therefore be proud of the part they can play. The public sentiment that they help to create is one of the most powerful forces in all the world. Laws are of secondary importance. Laws come in response to public sentiment. They are obeyed or flouted for the same reason. Those who would build

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

the better future must work for wiser public opinion, for the courage that follows truth wherever it leads, for the fairness that always gives the other side a hearing.

Pupils and teachers both have every need, at the same time, of a wise patience. Rushing matters not only is of no help, but a hindrance. There are no short cuts to high-grade behavior, whether for an individual, a nation, or a whole world. A century ago the Shah of Persia learned from an English official that in England there was an institution known as the Post Office, which alone produced a greater revenue than all Persia. The Shah thereupon exclaimed that he too would set up a Post Office and do it immediately. It had not struck him that before this institution could begin to approach the one in England as a revenue-getter, his country would have to number at least as many people able to read and write, and as many commercial interests. The ethical ascent of mankind takes time. An eager, alert, understanding patience, very different from a passive contentment, has ample work to accomplish.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

The man who has discovered an idea which allows us to penetrate . . . a little more deeply the eternal arcanum of Nature has been granted a great favor.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE tedious moralizing that mars many a story or literature period can spoil nature study too. One teacher solemnly exhorted his pupils to practice silence by pointing to the silent growth of forests, the silent whirling of the world through space, and so on. Another ended a lesson upon the bee with the traditional injunction to keep always busy. Even if there were not a great deal of fiction about this model industriousness of worker bees, there are better reasons for diligence than the example of insects who have no choice whether they are going to work or be lazy. The rich values to be found in nature study need no such treatment. What are they? Let a poet speak:<sup>1</sup>

The Spring blew trumpets of color;  
Her green sang in my brain—  
I heard a blind man groping  
“Tap—tap” with his cane;

I pitied him his blindness;  
But can I boast, “I see”?  
Perhaps there walks a spirit  
Close by, who pities me—

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<sup>1</sup> “Blind,” by Harry Kemp, reprinted by permission from *Cry of Youth*, published by Mitchell Kennerley.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

A spirit who hears me tapping  
The five-sensed cane of mind  
Amid such unguessed glories  
That I—am worse than blind!

Teaching that opens the eyes to these glories is amply justified. In the country, sometimes as often as in the city, children grow up with little keen awareness of the wonders with which their lives are surrounded. Folk from the city can put their vacations in the country to better uses than sitting on the porch of the hotel. Even within the city there are wonders for eyes that can see.

Nature study has its civic importance too. It can be used to cultivate a much needed respect for experts. In certain regions attempts were made to stop the ravages of the boll weevil by spraying the plants with insecticide. But farmers threatened to shoot the agents of the state experiment station for sprinkling "poison dust" on their cotton. Elsewhere farmers complained that pheasants were eating their corn. It was necessary to kill the birds, examine their crops, and show that no traces of corn could be found. The crops, however, did exhibit multitudes of cutworms. Here the farmers were convinced that the experts knew better than they. When menaces to health from slaughterhouses were exposed and President Roosevelt recommended legislation to protect the public against uninspected meat, a congressman sneered at the proposal and referred with scorn to "germs and other inventions of chemists and theorists." Thanks to the teaching of the sciences, these exhibitions are becoming more and more impossible.

All the values of nature study are increased when the children learn by doing. A child who has spent happy hours making blue prints of leaves, or smoke prints,

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

will never think of a leaf as "just a leaf." A plant grown by his own care is literally a part of himself. To cultivate even a single tulip in a flower pot in a city flat is worlds better than to study the cut flower. The care that the child exercises in looking after his plants is apt to increase his love for them. It also gives him a living sense of the time and attention required to make things grow properly. America has been called, sometimes not unjustly, a land of cut flowers.

Nowhere does the cut-flower trade assume such commanding importance. Churches and homes are decorated with them. One sees the churches of the Old World decorated with plants in pots or tubs. The Englishman or the German loves to care for the plant from the time it sprouts until it dies; it is a companion. The American snips off its head and puts it in his buttonhole; it is an ornament. I have sometimes wondered whether the average flower buyer knows that flowers grow on plants. Flowers are fleeting.

All of us have known people who derive more satisfaction from a poor plant that never blooms than others do from a bunch of American Beauty Roses at five dollars. There is individuality—I had almost said personality—in a growing, living plant, but there is little of it about a detached flower. And it does not matter so much if the plant is poor and weakly and scrawny. Do we not love poor and crippled and crooked people? A plant in the room on washday is worth more than a bunch of flowers on Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

Care for animals is likewise of value. A generation ago boys hunted birds with slingshots. Thanks to the schools, there is much less of this now. Many boys, instead of killing birds, hunt them with cameras, or keep records of varieties or species they have seen. They vie with each other in telling the results of their

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<sup>1</sup> L. H. Bailey in "The Nature-study Idea." Many city folk apparently do not know that fruits come from blossoms. If they did, some automobile tourists would leave more branches on the trees.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

observations, or drawing pictures in colors or building birdhouses.

A group of boys was engaged in stoning a colony of frogs. A man who had been watching them was moved to lecture them on cruelty to animals. Instead, he joined the group, took off his shoes, waded into the creek, and came out with a frog in his hand. He called the boys around him and pointed out to them many highly interesting facts about a frog's eyes, mouth, feet. There was no need to deliver his lecture. This was the first time the boys had really seen a frog.<sup>1</sup>

### SCIENCE AND TRUTH

The more formal study of science has all the values of nature study besides its own. No cultivated person to-day can afford to be ignorant of what science has done to improve man's estate. A history that omits this record is a caricature. In health alone the gain has been enormous. Plagues that once devastated the world are being controlled and prevented. The average expectation of life is now at least a third longer than a century ago; and the man of seventy to-day is equal in vigor to the earlier man of sixty. Let our children know the history of these benefits, and especially of what they have cost. We can never give them a complete education in a field so vast as science. But more important than any body of facts they can master is to have them understand, in moving fashion, something of the spirit by which the great gains have been made.

These victories of man's will and reason were the result of hard work of a special kind. They were made

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<sup>1</sup> See again the account of the children's experiences in nature study in Ch. VIII.

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

possible by a spirit bent, in the first place, on learning the facts. "Sit down before facts as a little child, follow humbly wherever nature leads, or you shall learn nothing," said Huxley. The true scientists are never arrogant, conceited, sophisticated. They know how much there is to be learned. They understand how appearances deceive, and how easy it is to leap to unsound conclusions. Like other people, they have their biases. But their work is fruitful to the extent that they control these biases in the interest of finding truth. "The greatest distortion of the intellect," said Pasteur, "is to believe only what one wishes to be true."

A century ago when the Philosophic Society assembled at Oxford, the academic philosophers looked with a certain scorn upon the men of science in their number. Among the scientists was Michael Faraday, one of the students to whom modern electricity is heavily indebted. But he and the others like him were referred to contemptuously by Keble as "the hodgepodge of philosophers." This is the spirit that throughout the ages has hindered the advancement of knowledge. The scientist never resents the entrance of disturbing ideas. He asks only that those ideas be tested upon their merits. He is willing to give them every chance regardless of what happens to cherished beliefs.

Consider this contrast: when Darwin or Einstein proclaim theories which modify our ideas, it is a triumph for science. We do not go about saying that there is another defeat for science because its old ideas have been abandoned. We know that another step of scientific insight has been gained.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (The Macmillan Co.), p. 270.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Charles Darwin, knowing how easy it is to forget statements we do not wish to hear, said,

I followed the rule, whenever I came across a published fact, or observation, or thought that was opposed to my own conclusions, to make a note of it without fail and at once; for I had found by experience that such facts or thought were far more apt to escape from the memory than favorable ones.

The great Scotch surgeon, Joseph Lister, who did much to inform mankind how to prevent infections, showed the scientific spirit by making public confession of one of his mistakes. At this time he was being scanned very critically by both friends and opponents. Among those present in the lecture theater were visitors from other hospitals in Great Britain and Europe. And yet Lister went out of his way that day to tell his students why a patient of his had died under an operation the day before. Now he knew that he should have ligatured a certain artery. His students never forgot the earnestness with which he impressed upon them the recommendations he was now obliged to make. This is one reason why surgery to-day is safer than it was three-quarters of a century ago.

The spirit of Lister illustrates the difference between science and the quackery that has always done its part to delay progress. If the wizard was known to fail, there was danger that his king would have him killed. The scientist is less concerned about his reputation than he is about finding truth. The quack doctor always has some "secret" remedy. The alchemist who sought a prescription for turning base metals into gold kept his formulas strictly to himself. The man of science, however, publishes his findings because he wants them to be tested everywhere by other competent minds. Science

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

is against the spirit that tries to hedge things and people with the mystery in which divinely commissioned autocrats always want to be wrapped. The importance of this attitude for democracy we shall consider presently. Publicity and democracy are inseparable.

### DEVOTED LIVES

In these achievements the scientist has not always had an easy task. He has had to fight against the authority of the past, against myths, against the tendency to hug agreeable hearsay. The tale has its inspiring devotions and heroisms to tell. Modern psychology is much indebted to a Nobel Prize winner, the Russian physiologist, Pavlov, for his work on conditioned reflexes. Some of his researches were conducted during the World War and the revolution in his country. He lived through many bitter months when his only food consisted of a piece of bread and a few potatoes, sometimes rotten.

He is not the only person who loved science with single-minded devotion. A French experimenter, Dr. Infroit, as a result of his investigations in the X-ray, was obliged to have his fingers amputated, then his hand, then his entire arm. He made the comment: "Thick lead armor would have prevented this; but with it, I could not have made my experiments." In 1921, Madame Curie was presented at Washington with a gram of radium purchased by the contributions of women of America in her honor. She was also given a deed conveying this gift to her in person. She thereupon had a paper drawn assigning her rights in the gift to the Radium Institute in Paris to be used in the work there in the event that she died. She did this, she

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

explained, because otherwise the gift would be divided among her heirs and perhaps lost to science.

Mention of certain names should not lead our pupils to suppose that these are the only ones deserving of such recognition. Sometimes we give all credit to a man who puts the finishing touch to some invention and forget that he may have done little more than commercialize knowledge won by a whole host of predecessors. Not all scientists are inventors. The practical uses of radio to-day would have been impossible but for Hertz, Clerk-Maxwell, Faraday, Ampere, Galvani, and even Galileo. Nor should we forget how many persons whose names are now quite unknown made the invention possible. Mathematicians, engineers, physicists, chemists, mechanics all did their part. For all the outstanding debt to the few illustrious ones, it must never be forgotten that science, like our other heritages, is the fruit of widespread coöperation.

In this sharing of the efforts and the fruits, one essential feature of science is close kin to the spirit of democracy. Once upon a time, as was mentioned, the doctor dealt in secret remedies. To-day it is expected that every offering receive the benefit of the most public critical testing, and, if genuine, be put to the utmost public benefit. Every scientific society has its publications and congresses for these purposes. There was a time when trade routes were a secret. A Dutch or Spanish captain who divulged information about winds, channels, currents could be put to death. He must not show a map to an outsider even in peril, nor lend him a pilot. Contrast this attitude with the coöperation of the leading nations to-day in collecting and publishing all possible information about conditions affecting travel on

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

the ocean and in the air. For a thrilling story, let pupils read about the work of the iceberg police in the North Atlantic Ocean. When the *Titanic* went down with over a thousand lives by colliding with an iceberg in the spring of 1912, the Ice Patrol was established to cruise in this region and warn vessels where danger was likely to be encountered. Incidentally, it may be remarked here, there is other important scientific research conducted by our various state and federal departments. The work, for example, of the Bureau of Fisheries, the Geological Survey, the Public Health Service, the Forest Service, should be known to every citizen.

### SCIENCE AND LAWSMAKING

The spirit of science will save us from many an act of foolish legislation. Anti-evolution laws were proposed in other states besides those which adopted them. But luckily not all of these states exposed themselves to the ridicule that has fallen upon the others. Lawmakers have also been guilty of other blunders. For example, if there is any fact upon which scholars in the field of penology are agreed, it is that severe penalties do not meet the problem of crime. Whatever else may be the method of preventing delinquency—more efficient work in our courts, more honest politicians and prosecutors, more certainty that the laws will be executed impartially—it is no way out to make the penalties more severe. And yet whenever a crime wave, real or alleged, makes its appearance, legislators and excited citizens can be counted upon to press for just one measure—more drastic punishment. Here the spirit of science would be of great use. It would look at the figures and ask why it is that

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

such large percentages of convicts are second, third, fourth offenders. It would want to know whether there were any connection between this fact and the fact that in some prisons, 50 per cent of the convicts spend their time in utter idleness, or that in some jails the general methods adopted are as ignorantly brutal as they were 200 years ago. Or, instead of treating the symptoms of the disease, it would avail itself of better, detailed knowledge of the causes of delinquency. But because the psychiatrist, the penologist, the social worker, are usually quiet, undramatic personages, they have little chance in some communities against the more sensational appeals to fear and revenge.<sup>1</sup>

A related need has already been discussed in the pages on propaganda. From all quarters to-day people are besieged by persons intent on "educating" public opinion. What an understanding of the spirit of science might do is indicated in these words:<sup>2</sup>

We must ourselves distinguish between opinions and facts, and teach our pupils so to distinguish. Science teaching must make those taught conscious of the working hypothesis as an

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<sup>1</sup> See H. S. Jennings, *The Biological Basis of Human Nature*, for an account of how the now discredited biology of thirty years ago was enacted into our immigration laws on the theory that racial differences are due to a heredity that can never be changed. Dr. Dorsey uses severe language: "The amount of false biology, infantile logic . . . that these heredity mongers bring to bear on our enormously complicated . . . racial and cultural problems is unbelievable." George A. Dorsey, "Race and Civilization," in Charles A. Beard, *Whither Mankind?* (Longmans, Green & Co.), p. 229. See also T. H. Morgan, *Evolution and Genetics*; F. Boaz, *Anthropology and Modern Life*; A. C. Haddon, *The Races of Man*.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin C. Gruenberg, "Scientific Education as a Defense Against Propaganda and Dogma," *Journal of Educational Method*, November, 1925. See also E. P. Lyon, "Science and Health—a Prescription for Cultivating Sales Resistance," *Survey Graphic*, June, 1930.

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

instrument of thought, not as a finality, or as an authoritative opinion to oppose to the opinions of others. The truth that most people take so seriously as something to teach, or not to teach, is in most cases a more or less elaborate, more or less supportable opinion. There are no "sound doctrines" except detailed facts, which for the most part are useless or uninteresting, and well considered hypotheses, which should, however, be taught as hypotheses and therefore subject to change. . . .

With the development of scientific methods and scientific ideals, and especially with the systematic introduction of science teaching into the public schools, indoctrination as a method and the true faith as an end must gradually be removed from education. Children will for a long time continue to come to school saturated in superstition and anchored to rigid prejudices. Parents will for a long time continue to protest at our efforts to analyze the objective world and our traditional concepts. We shall have to be patient, and we shall have to be at least as tolerant of their absurd doctrines as we want them to be of our alarming heresies. But we shall have to rely upon our scientific method and not be tempted into controversy or propaganda on our own account; for if we have faith in the validity of scientific methods, we need not be too greatly concerned about what our pupils believe for the time being. If we can get people into the habit of asking, "What are the facts in the case?" or, "What is the reliability or accuracy of these facts?" we shall not need to insist upon our own views, we shall not need to proclaim our doctrines with vehemence. . . .

Our insistence should be upon the principles that entitle science to a hearing: the reliance upon fact, the measurement and reproduction of fact, the honest facing of negative instances, nay, the eager quest for negative instances, the distinction between fact and theory, the experimental method, the frank acceptance of hypothesis as subject to revision, and the open mind ever ready to revise its postulates. It is the method of science that will enable us to counteract propaganda, and that will equip our pupils to meet the onslaughts of propaganda and dogmatism.

### METHODS

These are among the services made possible by the study of science. But these values will be carried over

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

into the lives of the pupils to the extent that teachers, aware of them, do their part to make them real. Science is not a body of information to be passed on, not even by having pupils stand at laboratory tables instead of learning from books. There are schools where the pupils go through a routine of so-called experimenting as mechanical as any cook's use of her store of recipes. They follow the directions in the manual, fill their notebooks neatly, memorize formulas and laws, and pass the examination at the end. Whatever else this may be, it is not the kind of science that the world needs. The main consideration is the quality of the thinking that the pupils do for themselves. The most elegantly equipped laboratory may do less for the boys and girls than one that has only the poorest of outfit but is directed by a teacher who appreciates the living values of his subject. Such a person will want his pupils to catch the inspirations that quickened the great scientists through the ages. He will want them to use their brains to observe, compare, discriminate, sift, analyze, imagine, reason, test with all accuracy. No less will he want them to apply these tools, each in his own way, to the remaking of his environment.

### MISUSING THE GIFTS

If science is to yield its best fruits, we must guard against two outstanding misuses. One is to go ahead making more effective the powers unlocked by scientific investigation and forgetting what is bad or good, better, best among the varied uses to which these tools can be put. Science has done an enormous service in, for example, releasing human energy from needless toil. The tunnel that the Roman emperor Claudius drove beneath

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Monte Salviano, three and a half miles long, condemned 30,000 men to drudgery for eleven years; such a tunnel to-day requires 100 men for ten months. Science promotes health. The modern presses make reading available for millions who in earlier days would have been left illiterate.

But the tools wrought by science can be used by the bandit also. They give him a swift automobile and also allow him to surround that automobile at need with a dangerous smoke screen. The weapons that the modern nations can now employ against one another may some day wipe Western civilization off its present map entirely. A few years ago an explosion took the lives of scores of people in a public hospital. A fire in the basement had reached a room where immense quantities of films had been stored. From these a poison gas was generated that did the killing on the floors above, for the gas was conveyed into all the wards and rooms by means of ventilators. The situation was made ironic by the very effectiveness of this apparatus. The ventilators were a modern method to spread wholesome air. But now their effectiveness made them all the more deadly. This is precisely what science has done for war. The damage done in the hospital was accidental. It was a tiny circumstance compared with what men do designedly in war, thanks to the misuse of science.

We touch here upon one of the bitterest needs of our age. We shall not get very far ahead until we face with all frankness the moral disgrace it is to be contented with a "civilization" that is still on this level:

I am just forty-five. That is not so terribly old. Yet I can remember the coming of the telephone and the electric light and the automobile, and wireless telegraphy and the movies. Also,

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

with my contemporaries, I have been a spectator of more wars, violent upheavals, rebellions, disasters, murders, massacres and general outbursts of cruelty than any other group of children born in the last twenty centuries. After a couple of hours of saying to myself: "Now suppose that I had been born in 1324, or in 1356, or in 1674," I have come to the conclusion that, even with the help of Peasant revolutions, Jacqueries, Crusades, Witchhunts, and St. Bartholomew massacres, I could not reconstruct any period of forty-five consecutive years that would show such a terrible record as my own. The span beginning with 1780 seems to come nearest. But the cutthroats of Robespierre and the veterans of Napoleon were amateurs as compared with our soldiery.<sup>1</sup>

In fairness to scientists, it must be said that physics and chemistry are not by any means alone in this danger of misuse.

I know of many shining truths which fools have made use of to their own undoing and which the tyrants of mankind have made use of for turning this fair earth into a ruin and a desolation. Some of them are scientific truths—they have ended in poison gas. Some of them are philosophic truths—they have ended in quackery, which is the poison gas of the spiritual world. Some of them are religious truths—they have ended in persecution.<sup>2</sup>

What all this means is that people who devote their lives to working out tools for other people to use cannot wholly divest themselves of responsibility for the ends to which the tools are applied. A chemist, simply as a scientist, is not concerned whether his findings will be used to save human life or destroy it. But he is not merely a scientist. He is also a citizen and a man. When he pays his local taxes, he cannot say that be-

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<sup>1</sup> Hendrik W. Van Loon in *Plain Talk*, February, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> L. P. Jacks, "Is There a Fool-Proof Science?" *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1924.

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

cause he is a chemist, it is none of his business how these taxes are spent. How the gifts of his brain are used is no less his affair. He is under the same obligation as other men to see that his country unites with other lands to put a stop forever to a monstrous moral disgrace.

### PUPPET, ANIMAL, AND MAN

The other outstanding misuse of science is the popular psychology to which reference has already been made in these pages—the kind that ignores the difference between man and the lower orders. Nobody has any business to dictate the field in which the student of psychology shall make his researches. Immense good has already come from one group of studies in the buried, subconscious life, and from others in the likenesses between the behaviors of men and animals. Science must always be trusted, no matter how unpleasant its findings may appear or be. Truth always at all costs! But the point to be noted is that such work is scientific only when it confines itself to its chosen field. It is unscientific, for example, to stop with the fact that man and animal are alike *in those respects which the psychologist has chosen to study* and then assert that there is little if anything more to man than these likenesses. Men are assuredly in many ways like white rats and guinea pigs. But they also exhibit differences that are far from trivial. Any study that concentrates upon the likenesses and ignores the differences is sadly incomplete. To select fragmentary findings and apply them to the support of a favored dogma is grossly unscientific.

There is much of such teaching to-day. It holds that man is only a puppet moved by the same hereditary and

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

environmental forces as other creatures. It holds that because he is descended from the lower orders, and because his mental development can be traced back step by step to the subhuman world, he has really none of the higher powers in which he supposes himself distinct. Just now many who enjoy a certain favor as interpreters of human life call themselves realists; and as realists they think they are telling us all that man is by showing what a sorry lot we human beings are—how cruel and sensual, hypocritical and greedy, especially how absurdly petty.

There can be no quarrel, we repeat, with facts. The more facts the scientist can give us, the better. But facts are one thing and the inferences drawn from them quite another. It is a mistake to suppose that we can disprove the reality of man's higher nature by showing what it has in common with the lower. A man who saw the Grand Canyon for the first time is reported to have made the comment, "What's all the fuss about? It's only a hole in the ground." He was right; and he was also wrong, as lamentably so as the people who think they can cancel the difference between higher and lower by focusing attention on the common element in both.

Others appeal to the history of man's development and insist that this shows an unbroken continuity. But how can they say that what appears at the higher end of the scale is only what was there at the lower end? This is as mistaken as to say that New York in 1933 does not differ essentially from New Amsterdam in 1660, an airplane from an ox cart, or a man from a child, because the main thing is the continuity. There are border-line cases between responsible human beings and moral idiots. But it is poor science to leap from this fact to the state-

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

ment that normal human beings too are helpless puppets, victims of heredity and environment, incapable of resisting temptation, or steering their lives wisely.

The believers in the puppet theory likewise oversimplify by shutting their eyes to the differences. We are in some respects puppets, composed only of glands and muscles, pulled hither and yon by natural forces. Sometimes assuredly we act as if we were nothing more. But one cannot help wondering just why men and women happen to be the only puppets who are aware of the fact that they are marionettes. It seems strange that mere marionettes can know themselves to be such. Is a puppet any longer merely a puppet when he himself pulls even one of the strings? If this mechanistic theory were true, how could anybody know it to be so? Some sort of being must be doing the experimenting, the observing, the measuring. Who is noting the behavior of the rats in the maze? Only a more developed rat? But if man is conceded to be "more developed," the very phrase by its largeness conceals the issue that it is supposed to clarify. The science itself that the theory invokes would be unthinkable without presupposing that men have their scientific minds and their ideals of scientific integrity. The argument against the higher nature must assume the very reality that it is trying to disprove.<sup>1</sup> It is like

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<sup>1</sup> See H. J. Bridges, *Taking the Name of Science in Vain* (The Macmillan Co.). Not all scientists accept the mechanistic philosophy. Among biologists, for example, there is an important group who believe in emergent evolution, that is, that there are in nature, utterly new, creative possibilities that cannot be predicted from what has gone before. One such biologist says: "There is nothing in legitimate science or scientific method that makes it unreasonable to hope for the appearance in the future of what has not been seen in the past. Nothing in science is incompatible with striving to realize ideals that have never yet been realized." See H. S. Jennings,

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

using language to argue that no such thing as language exists.

The harm in this misuse of science can be met by a more thoroughgoing, more genuinely scientific study of human nature. This is a lifelong business, in which much can be learned from the laboratory and from the physician's office. Every aid these can give is essential. But something can also be learned from understanding the lives of morally healthy men and women, and the meaning of spiritual growth.

### MATHEMATICS

To improve the work of science, the human mind has shaped for itself an instrument which, like science itself and other tools, may be put to a variety of noble or ignoble applications. The arithmetically gifted swindler is more dangerous than the illiterate. What are the better gains from the increasing mastery of mathematics?

The scientist is provided with just the instrument he needs for the most accurate measurement. To be objective, the physician does not guess whether his patients are fevered by feeling their foreheads. Because his own hand may be hot or cold, he uses a thermometer, and gets a statement that is both objective and exact. In another instance, where he once had to guess he now gets a "blood count."

The modern farmer keeps very accurate records. The chemist analyzes the soil for him and can advise him far better than farmers were once ready to concede.

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*The Biological Basis of Human Nature* (W. W. Norton & Co.), p. 376. Elsewhere Dr. Jennings pleads for the view that "the inheritance of man is not alone what he is born with but what he can develop."

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Formerly navigators steered by the stars; the modern steamer is equipped with devices made possible by mathematics. The danger to airplanes from fog is being removed. Range finders and other such devices are just a few illustrations of the debt.

Science is concerned in general with searching out the causal interlockings in nature and stating these with the utmost precision, that is, in mathematical combinations. It gets a workable certainty by linking up one pointer-reading with another. The whole structure of modern scientific theory is being remade because of some of the new combinations thus developed. Einstein could not have produced his gravitation theory if mathematicians had not already prepared the tensor calculus. Equations in the quantum theory might be worked out with the aid of a dot and twenty-seven zeroes, but logarithms save the time. Indeed the world with which the new physics deals is almost entirely a world of symbols or measure-numbers. As Eddington says:<sup>1</sup>

Something unknown is doing we don't know what . . . and yet from so unpromising a beginning, we really do get somewhere. We bring into order a host of apparently unrelated phenomena; we make predictions and our predictions come off. The reason—the sole reason for this progress—is that our description is not limited to unknown agents, executing unknown activities, but numbers are scattered freely in the description. To contemplate electrons circulating in the atom carries us no further; but by contemplating eight circulating electrons in one atom and seven circulating electrons in another, we begin to realize the difference between oxygen and nitrogen.

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<sup>1</sup> A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (The Macmillan Co.), p. 291.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### HOW TEACH?

The simpler uses of this marvelous tool are brought home to children from their earliest years by practice. They learn to keep scores in their games instead of trusting to memory or guess. They are taught how to make out their own budgets. Examples drawn from the budgets of their own homes help to point the importance of economy. Sometimes they make children better aware of the burdens their parents are carrying, for instance, in insurance. This is true of school and community as well. In one school, a workshop instructor found that the boys were wasteful in their use of wood, even using dowels to mix paints. He had them compute the exact cost of such waste for a single class and then for the entire school. It so happened that their school was greatly in need of certain books; and a comparison of the figures was made. The civics teacher does this with statistics of city, state, and federal administration. In short, wherever exact relationships need to be understood, here is a valuable corrective to vagueness. The neatness, orderly arrangement, rigorous attention to detail are habits that a wise teaching tries to apply to other fields than the work in the mathematics hour. There will always be need for correctives to loose generalization, for conduct based on knowledge rather than on guess. It means much to the children when once they glimpse something of the educational ideal that insists upon these habits of exact computation and strict logic.

It may surprise some of our pupils to know that this subject has a history worth knowing. Like other contributions to the march of intellect through the ages, this one represents the coöperation of able minds in

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

many different lands. Our pupils should know how geometry is indebted to the Egyptian priests hundreds of years before the Christian era, who worked out this way of establishing boundary lines in their periodically flooded country, how the Greeks learned from the Egyptians, how the Arabs (the word algebra is itself a reminder) made their contributions and gave Europe the Hindu numerals.

A valuable exercise in imagination is to try to think back across the ages to the time when numbers were first invented and what a step forward for mankind this was. It is not too much to say that the invention of symbols was one of the most significant of all moments for the human race. It was not merely because symbols saved time, but much more because nothing so marks the ascent of man above the brute as the power to symbolize his ideas. The brute is tied to concrete fact. Man has the power to let his mind move freely in a world of ideas. Mathematics or symbolized logic is a superb expression of this power.

So it is well to try to have our pupils understand how through the centuries mathematics has always been prized, not merely for its practical values but for its contribution to culture. In Plato's sketch of an ideal commonwealth where the rulers were to be philosophers, nobody was to be eligible for such office until he had proved himself master in mathematics. Until comparatively recent times, mathematics was one of the two or three indispensable studies in college and university. Although to-day doubts have been cast upon the so-called disciplinary value, and although teachers are less inclined to insist that a training in mathematics possesses all the values once asserted for it, nevertheless, where the ideal

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

of such mental power is properly interpreted and applied, a training in mathematics is highly valuable, even for those who are not going to be chemists or engineers.

Our pupils will be the better for feeling themselves grow in the power to deal with abstract relationships. Much is gained when they feel the thrill that comes with conscious ability to hold these symbolized relationships clearly in mind and work out their further implications. Who can estimate the gain to human reason when the first equation was expressed in terms of symbols? Children can appreciate the benefits to mankind that came with spoken language. Written language made for still more effective communication. A still higher stage was reached when the symbols referred to generalizations or universals. To work with these is to employ a power higher than intelligence. Animals show intelligence. But to use intelligence to hold whole trains of thought in the mind, especially in relating abstractions and generalizations, is the higher gift we call reason. It marks no slight advance when a child becomes aware that his own growth in mathematical ability recapitulates an important line of growth in the human race as a whole.

The beauty, too, must not be slighted. It is not merely that the nature lover sees geometric forms in snowflakes, flowers, sea shells, fungi. The lover of mathematics lets his mind travel in a world of abstract relations that has its own harmonies of structure. These have a perfection like that of painting or music, except that their appeal is to the understanding rather than to the senses. Mathematical ability may well be called æsthetic. The enlarged mentality of the person who can appreciate a delight of this kind is surely worth cultivating. If not all our pupils are ready for such appreciation, those who

## THE NATURAL SCIENCES

are should receive here, as elsewhere, their special stimulus to further growth.

All this, once more, requires inspired teaching. The ethical values of mathematics, in the wider sense here suggested, will have a better chance to prove themselves when there is conscious effort to realize them. Many persons think of this subject with dislike. This may be due to pupil deficiencies. It may also be due to deficient teachers.



PART IV  
CONCLUSION



## CHAPTER XVI

### MEASURING RESULTS

And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!  
RUDYARD KIPLING

IN recent years the questions have been thrust home to us: How much of our work for “character-education” is window-dressing? How much carries over? How much is mere pious wish? Sir Charles Hawtrey mentions an old tutor who was sure that the character of his boys was bettered by good reading and especially by his crisp, businesslike, highly practical comments on what they read. One morning when a lad was reading the Beatitudes, the teacher interrupted: “‘Blessed are the pure in heart.’ Boys, did you hear that? If you’re not pure in heart, I’ll flog you.”

There are other methods of improvement equally cherished; and most, if not all of them, are now being questioned as to their effectiveness. It is proposed that we get down to business and measure the actual results by certain objective tests. Standardized tests are now widely used to measure general intelligence as well as specific achievement in composition, arithmetic and other subjects. Judgments here can now be more impersonal and precise than they used to be. Why not employ these ways to judge honesty, self-control, public spirit, reverence, and so check up accurately on the results of methods in character education? Such tests are already applied in many schools, and new ones are being devised every month. What is to be said for them?

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

Not that the idea is entirely new. Benjamin Franklin tells in his autobiography how he kept a score card in which he marked himself on his success in living up to each of a given list of virtues. Schools too have long been issuing reports on more than the child's achievement in grammar and arithmetic. They have reported on his behaviors as a school citizen. Nor have they been content to speak of character in general as simply good, bad, or medium. They have specified traits like obedience, courtesy, perseverance, willingness to coöperate, and have graded these on the reports. What is now being done is to make all this more precise in the record for any one child and to use the tests and ratings on a wide scale to study the results of specific methods. At the Ninth International Congress of Psychology at Yale University in September, 1929, P. R. Hightower submitted the results of such a study of 3,316 children which showed that no correlation was proved between high character and proficiency in Bible classes, nay, that the highest rating in the latter might go with the lowest rating in character, and that mere knowledge of itself could not be expected to insure proper behavior.<sup>1</sup>

### REPLACE GUESSING BY CERTAINTY

A year before, the first volume of a series of studies in the nature of character was issued by the Character Education Inquiry of Teachers College, Columbia University, in coöperation with the Institute of Social and Religious Research.<sup>2</sup> Pupils in a number of schools had

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<sup>1</sup> Pleasant R. Hightower, "Biblical Information in Relation to Character and Conduct," *Iowa Studies in Character* (State University of Iowa).

<sup>2</sup> H. Hartshorne and M. A. May, *Studies in Deceit* (The Macmillan Co.).

## MEASURING RESULTS

been tested to see what degree of deceit they exhibited. For example, an examination was given in arithmetic, and opportunity was offered for the pupil to improve his answers by stealth. A system was devised whereby the amount of cheating could be computed exactly. Here too it was found that children who had received a certain education presumed to result in higher behavior were not morally superior. In a second series of such studies,<sup>1</sup> the pupils were tested for acts of kindness and for power of self-control. They were asked to give up much wished objects, like money or toys, for the sake of charity. They were rated for persistence, as shown in curiosity to see how an incompletely story ended, or in solving a mechanical puzzle or a mental puzzle.

It is very likely that such quantitative researches will increase in the years ahead, especially in America, where modern business has already shown itself sympathetic toward such charting of the personal characteristics of employees. Every help in locating specific needs is to be welcomed, and we may be sure that time will weed out any extravagant claims or other errors.

Medical and surgical science had to follow a similar road to advance from magic and quackery. Instead of continuing to treat the body as a mysterious unit, the biologists subjected each organ and constituent to minute observation and controlled experimentation. In like manner, it was at length recognized that we could gain little exact knowledge about character and how to change it unless its component features were accurately studied and experimented with.<sup>2</sup>

That is, instead of saying, "He can be trusted because he has character," we desire to know more precisely what

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<sup>1</sup> H. Hartshorne, M. A. May, J. B. Maller, *Studies in Service and Self-Control* (The Macmillan Co.).

<sup>2</sup> May, Hartshorne, Maller, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

is this character which he "has." Is it a general possession, more or less mysterious? Or can we get more light upon it by observing how it acts at these and these specific points? Such are the objects of this growing educational movement.

High spots among the results of the May-Hartshorne investigations, besides those mentioned, are thus far as follows.

Specific acts of moral behavior are learned as other acts of skill are, by specific experience rather than by listening to discourses upon such skill. Tendencies can be changed, at least temporarily, by suitable teaching. Individuals are more likely to rate higher where they are encouraged by the morale of the group as a whole. The personality of the teacher is highly important, enough to change the scores very markedly where the class is put in charge of a teacher of superior personality. Demands that we make upon children may be too high. No program of character education can be organized intelligently until present tendencies or weaknesses in each child have been diagnosed. Opportunities and temptations must be carefully graduated.

Obvious as these findings are, they have at least this importance. They show that while "children have been acquiring habits which are important for character . . . there is little evidence that effectively organized moral education has been taking place."<sup>1</sup> What the children are at present learning of self-control, service, honesty is largely a matter of accident. "Anarchy in the leadership of moral education is not likely to produce order in the character of a child. At all events, such

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<sup>1</sup> Hartshorne, May, and Maller, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

## MEASURING RESULTS

leadership as we have in typical American communities has not resulted in organized conduct.”<sup>1</sup>

All gratitude therefore is due to those who wish to build on something better than guesswork. There is no predicting what their method may yet bring to light. The spirit of science requires that the trail-makers be given time and the encouragement of the open mind.

### DOUBTS ABOUT SOME TESTS

But certain warnings are needed. Consider first the charts in which the pupil does his own rating of himself. These have indeed a certain usefulness. Pupils are more likely to improve when they are taught to look for more truthfulness, industry, cleanliness, courtesy, rather than for character in general, or for some one trait that happens to be especially interesting to the class teacher. One teacher may attach excessive importance to polite manners, another to kindness. The chart offers a wider view. Besides, when emphasis is put on the constant need to improve, the pupil gets something of the spur there is in playing an interesting game where score is kept carefully. A boy charts a graph for himself to indicate, for instance, how steadily, or otherwise, he manifests some ten or a dozen desirable traits. He observes that his “profile” is a very jagged-looking affair. His teacher lets him see another pupil’s in which the line is less rocky. Next month the boy tries to have his own line straighter. Many, no doubt, are benefited by such a periodic look at themselves in the moral mirror.

Nevertheless, we must guard against too great enthusiasm for such devices. Character-rating is different from rating for academic achievements and needs. It is pos-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

sible to be more objective about one's proficiency in spelling than about the purity, let us say, of one's unselfishness. Some children may be made priggish, although the remedy for this, to be sure, is not so very different from that applied to any kind of conceit. Some may be persuaded for one reason or another consciously to rate themselves too favorably; and once deceit of this kind enters, the whole value disappears.

The most helpful method of self-rating would seem to be one in which the pupil does not put his name upon the paper and the class looks for a score for the class as a whole. Where no name is given, there is less occasion to score falsely. Working for a better score for the class as a whole encourages a highly important and effective social incentive. How fruitful this will be depends upon the ability of the teacher to keep the group spirit of the class high. In general, however, it is a question whether all this frequent soul-searching, especially for the sake of a numerical grading, does not do at least as much harm as good. It has by no means been proved, as we shall try to show presently, that the best thing about character can be caught in terms of number; and perhaps, for some children already too introvert, there will be the risk of excessive self-scrutiny. In the main, the sturdiest moral growth is likely to be more or less unconscious and spontaneous. It will probably be more healthy when the children are steadily encouraged to reach out toward the better things that they learn to see than when they are asked often to record the precise degree of their failure and attainment.

As to numerical ratings on individuals and groups by other people, more doubts of a related kind arise. Character is a much more complicated affair than intelligence.

## MEASURING RESULTS

The most intelligent are not necessarily the best behaved, as people knew long before any modern tests were devised. It means nothing to point to the larger number of low I. Q.'s in our prisons—the brainiest do not appear in the statistics, because they manage to elude the police or to be acquitted. Ideals are as much a matter of feeling as they are of intellectual apprehension. Just why any one of us wants to do right is hard to say; but the wanting is essential. So is what the old school called will power. The interplay of knowledge, feeling, will is a highly complex affair.

Hence, although certain overt behaviors can be observed and measured, the results tell very little as yet about the success or failure of the character methods employed. If it is pointed out that many graduates of Bible classes have a low moral rating, it may be retorted that without such schooling, the rating for any one group thus tested might have been even lower still.<sup>1</sup> Nobody can say yet just how far this is true of any individual student. Nor, if the results seem to show success, can we be so sure either. There is no way of telling yet whether graduates of one school rather than another show up better because they went to that particular school, or because they were

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<sup>1</sup> Some schools may be rated surprisingly lower than others until we remember that just these schools were chosen because of special problems in the lives of the children. Parents who are alarmed about their children may send them to military schools, or parochial, or "select" establishments precisely because the pupils seem to need exactly these. Or the parents may choose a boarding school or a country day school because they themselves are unsuccessful as parents. None of these facts may appear in the tabulations. In one study, in order to determine the social backgrounds of the pupils, they were given a test in etiquette. But there are homes where all the outward signs of culture can be found but where serious conflicts in the inner lives of the parents have left their mark on the children. Homes rated as high-grade may be in truth quite poor.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

at the beginning a selected lot. If we say "Heredity," we must ask, "Are the geneticists in agreement as to what is inherited and what is changeable?"

A real test would tell what is the part actually played by heredity and what by the environment. Thus far we are scarcely in a position to speak with assurance here or to devise thoroughgoing tests. We should have to begin with twins at the moment of their birth. We should have to separate hundreds of such twins from the very beginning, bring them up under carefully controlled systems, watch at every point the various influences playing upon them, and only then make our comparisons. Such an experiment may some day be made and give us more genuine knowledge than we now possess. That day is not here yet.

If it is difficult and sometimes impossible to trace behaviors back, it is likewise unsafe to forecast with complete assurance. Results expected or unexpected may appear long after the child has grown up.

The use of the word "may" in all these paragraphs indicates our lack of knowledge. We do not *know*, for example, whether children are made more priggish by self-scrutiny. We can only guess on the basis of our highly variable abilities to size people up. And whatever may be the findings with regard to groups at any one time, we do not know yet—for any individual—just what changes are likely to occur. A lad who is easy-going and untrustworthy may be sobered by the death of his father and the need to go to work for the family. On the other hand, he may not. A genuinely scientific shaping of character has a long way to go.

## MEASURING RESULTS

### IDEALS NOT ALWAYS ON THE SURFACE

What is to be said about testing the effectiveness of ideals that do not appear in action immediately but wait, sometimes for years, to be expressed? A child hears a story when he is ten years old. It is a tale of courage. It touches him then as just a good story. Its ethical implications, and especially any suggestion it may offer as to his own conduct, do not strike him at the time. Indeed, after reading it, he may continue to manifest his familiar fears and be rated low. But the time may come years later when a fresh memory of the tale is stirred in him, and he is helped by it to act less timidly. Even though, of course, this later courage is more likely to appear if the normal braveries are present at the usual period, nevertheless there is no knowing that possibilities may emerge later which a present measurement does not reveal.

John Keats tells us that he had never read Homer although he had heard of him often. Then he read Chapman's translation; and he felt

like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken.

This was one result of hearing Homer praised. How long a time elapsed since he had first heard of him? We can imagine how, the very day before Keats read Chapman's verses, a test might have been applied to see what effect had been produced by all the hearing of Homer's praises. The result might have made Keats and his teachers blush. The love that lay at the roots of his reading took its own good time to appear. Other loves take their time, too.

Once Keats had read Chapman, it is argued, we could

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

at any rate measure the effect of this experience by checking up on how much else he thereupon read of Greek history and literature. Assuredly. But what good would a precise record of the number of such pages be? If ten years later (after he had escaped the measurers), Keats read only one first-rate work, it would have been better than if his score card showed that in the year after reading Chapman, he had read a dozen inferior writings. The permanently best results of any teaching may lie dormant for a long time.

This is apt to be most true of those more intimate experiences that are at least as important in the making of personality as the more obvious outer behaviors. There is a world, a very private one, that a person carries within him. Reveries, longings (sometimes not fully conscious), unspoken judgments, shy aspirations as well as bold ones, all play their part in making us what we are. They are present in childhood when the tests are made, but the tests are devised to indicate quite other things and pass these by. It is just as well that the tests do fail to measure these. There are highly important areas in life that it is better to leave quite private. "Let not thy left hand know" is one such reminder. Love vaunteth not itself. As Felix Adler said:<sup>1</sup>

We withdraw from public gaze, as a profanation, whatever is intimate. You may believe, for instance, that the face of a man or woman is open to every one's inspection, but it is not so. To the casual passer-by, or even to the more distant acquaintance, the face is often an impenetrable screen not revealing the inner thought or purpose, but rather concealing it. And even where this is not so, the face of a highly developed man

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<sup>1</sup> From an address in *The Standard*, Vol. 7, p. 251 (published by American Ethical Union, 2 West 64th Street, New York).

## MEASURING RESULTS

or woman only allows those utterances of the inner life to pass outward which concern the most general social relations; while it is in the circle of the most intimate friends only, of the dearest, the most cherished, the most congenial companions that the soul advances from its recesses to its gate, that the facial expression sheds forth fully and freely the riches that have been kept from the unintimate or the uncongenial. Thus even the face, though it is uncovered, is in fact covered wherever the sense of personality is pronounced, wherever the man or the woman is truly civilized. Civilization and the sense of personality go together. Whatever is connected with intimate relations is desecrated by being exhibited to the public gaze.

### MOTIVES ESCAPE MEASUREMENT

The field in which the tests are valid is quite narrow. Some of the traits that appear most frequently in the literature on the subject can hardly be called moral at all. Among these are "persistence" and "decision." Another speaks of "muscular control" and "vitality." Good and necessary as these undoubtedly are, they are after all not of the same rank morally as, let us say, justice or public spirit, because they are tools which may or may not be used to make their possessor more just or more public-spirited. They can even make wrongdoing more serious. The police would have much less work on their hands if some of the folk requiring their attention were not so persistent, or decided, or aggressive, or loyal. The moral value in having a will-temperament of a high rating is the motive that inspires the expression. But motives are not subject to measurement—yet. We use terms that are roughly quantitative when we say "more" honest or "less," "more" conscientious or "less." But these really refer to quality.

Apparently similar acts can be done from very different motives. One boy will forego the opportunity

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

to cheat because he scorns to play the sneak; another because he had been taught that God is watching and may strike him dead or may burn him in Hell; another because he suspects some kind of trap (as children are likely to do when character-testing grows more common); another because of the disgrace of being found out. When we test children for service, some may not be eager to make picture cards for the poor because they are already doing things like this at home, or they may think it unimportant compared with other acts of service. Or some may do this charity very eagerly and score high because it is an unusual and fresh experience. It is hard to say of any person just why he gives to charity. The same is true of other acts. Are those who pride themselves on plain speaking as candid as they think, or only callous? Immanuel Kant raised this question long ago. Was a man temperate or ascetic about drink because of moral scruple, or might it not be because he was too miserly to give himself a good time?

It is argued that we can measure motives by measuring the behaviors, that the more conscientious will do more of the acts expected of such persons, and that character has always been estimated in terms of consistent and persistent doing, the only genuine coin in which one can pay his way. But the same act can be repeated ten times from ten different sets of motives. And it is another kind of act each time. Charity for praise is so different from giving in love that the two cannot be called by the same name. The quality of the motives nobody can judge precisely, not even the person himself.

In one respect the attempt is almost as futile as judging a work of art quantitatively. We can describe a canvas by Rembrandt in highly exact terms, with mathematical

## MEASURING RESULTS

accuracy for each shade of color and each detail of composition. We can call on the chemist to tell us the last word about components of the paints. And yet the something that makes the master work what it is will still elude description.

Over and beyond such mixed creatures as our daily behaviors show us to be are the ideal selves. For all the fact that some schools of psychology choose to make their studies without reference to "souls," and that myths of various kinds have grown up around the belief in "spirit," this higher nature in man is real enough to those with eyes to see it. And its best expressions would scarcely seem capable of the measuring we can apply to acts of good manners, or to such introductory behaviors as refraining from deception, or sharing a toy with a neighbor.

Plato's remarks on a related problem may be of use here.

In the "Phaedo," one of the dialogues recording the last scene in the prison to which Socrates had been so unjustly condemned, Plato makes Socrates tell how difficult he found self-knowledge. What was the self on which a man should pattern his life? He was looking, he said, for a totality, a comprehensive, all-embracing ideal, and was asked to content himself with mere parts. It was, he added, as if a person were to say that the actions of Socrates were caused in general by "mind," but in trying to explain "the causes of my several actions in detail, went on to show that I sit here because my body is made up of bones and muscles." Then such a person would go into great detail about bones, muscles, joints, skin. And all the time he would be forgetting the true cause, namely that Socrates had judged it best to

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

remain and undergo his sentence instead of seeking escape:

For I am inclined to think that these muscles and bones of mine would have gone off long ago to Megara, if they had been moved only by their own idea of what was best and if *I* had not chosen the better part. . . . It may be said indeed that without bones and muscles, . . . I cannot execute my purposes. But to say that I do as I do because of them, and that this is the way in which mind acts, and not from the choice of the best, is a very careless and idle mode of speaking. I wonder that they cannot distinguish the cause from the condition.

Almost, it would seem, Plato had in mind modern behaviorism. Perhaps what he said has its bearings also on other aspects of the forever interesting riddle of personality.

### WHY EMPLOY NUMBERS?

Among those who are working out moral tests, there are some who readily admit these limitations. Hartshorne and May repeatedly declare that their studies measure only overt behaviors. In a public address, Dr. Hartshorne is quoted as saying, "In thus testing the products of character education, it is not assumed that character is the sum of these products but that useful knowledge of character is derived from our knowledge of these parts and their interrelations." A third volume in the series of studies by the Character Education Inquiry considers this problem of integration. Studies already issued speak of certain unknown "subtle factors in the control of each form of conduct." There is no antecedent reason for supposing that these elusive conditions will forever escape scientific investigation. Sci-

## MEASURING RESULTS

ence does not stay its quest when its problems are found to be complex. But it is hard to see, on the other hand, that any new or far-reaching light upon personality has been shed by the measurement literature already published. Fathers, mothers, teachers, and friends have been sizing up character for many centuries. They still do. Very little would seem to have been gained by stating judgments in terms of percentile norms.

Nobody will deny that in judging character it is necessary to be objective, but there are other ways than the statistical method. A teacher whose pride has been wounded by the remark of a pupil will brand the boy as "impertinent" where the lad is only crude, or frank, or even wiser—for the boy may be right and the teacher wrong. In any event, a judgment of the boy should be based on better ground than the way his teacher happens to feel about him. But to get this objective classification, it does not follow that the teacher must wait until a numerical test has been devised. Reports from other teachers, from parents, from friends will help.

The method of case-study is also fairly objective. (Examples are cited in Chapters VII and VIII.) This method tries to find out all the facts it can about heredity, health, home, and other influences. It is proving itself useful in social work and mental hygiene even without the need to employ numerals at every point in describing maladjustment and prescribing remedies.

Highly useful too is another educational contribution that is objective in its method without using numbers to convince us. Schools of to-day get better work from the children by tapping and directing their native interests instead of snubbing these in the name of discipline. A generation ago, this conception of education had

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

to fight hard to be accepted. Now it is a commonplace. But even if there were no achievement tests to prove that children in progressive schools did as well as elsewhere or better, modern educators are convinced that the new ways are sounder; and all this important experimenting has been objective without the aid of tables and graphs.

One person's opinion undoubtedly needs to be corroborated or corrected. But just what advantage there is in a test that would allow us to rate a child 74 per cent, let us say, in "respect for teachers," is hard to see. Or if teachers observe that a whole class is eagerly interested in preparing a Christmas basket, or that a new way of managing the dining room brings about more orderliness and courtesy in the lunch periods, what is gained by computing percentages, mean deviations, and probable errors? The time given to such computations might conceivably be employed to greater profit elsewhere.

Something surely can be said for the numerical method, when, instead of displacing the judgments of common-sense observations, it supplements them. And if tests so accurate and so genuine could really be devised that a discouraged teacher on comparing scores could be justified in regarding a gain of 1 per cent in honesty as a distinct achievement, everybody would be the gainer. In the administration of such enormous public schools as to-day's, it is no doubt true that many teachers fall short of the highest ability; and there may well be a certain usefulness in methods, crude as they are, which allow supervisors to check up and to reduce waste. In the absence of anything better, the tests may prove effective in defining at least certain minimum essentials, just as there are persons who will not be convinced that their Sunday-school methods are antiquated until the test-

## MEASURING RESULTS

studies prove it to them by "talking figures, black on white." The crude teaching done in many a community is a fact too important to be ignored. Any method that carries a promise of improvement is a help.

But, for the very reason just mentioned, caution must be exercised against a method that may too easily become another "quantity-production" method. Because the task of bringing great masses of children up to even a minimum standard is so huge, there is danger of regarding character chiefly if not entirely in these negative terms. There is serious need, as these pages have often repeated, for much higher conceptions. Whether the movement in this direction will be much helped by a mass-production instrument is open to grave question.

The doubt may also be expressed in another way. The psychology underlying the moral-testing procedure is essentially behavioristic. It is open to the same objection as that which lies against the Watson teachings: valid as the findings about conditioned reflexes are with respect to the acts that they measure, human beings are much more and other than the numbers indicate. The charts tell us truths about that fragment of life that lends itself to such measurement. The best about man lies outside the field where the measuring can be done.<sup>1</sup>

For these reasons it would be better if what is now

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<sup>1</sup> "Corralling a comet" is what one writer calls the attempt to try laboratory methods on anything so elusive as the human spirit. Archibald Rutledge in *Outlook and Independent*, Sept. 17, 1930. "We can but guess at what goes on in (a child's) mind and what it implies. We may glimpse the progress now and then but we cannot compute it by any known system without danger to him and ourselves," says Angelo Patri in "Educational Measurements," *School and Home*, November, 1919, p. 16. See also P. Cutright and W. A. Shoemaker, "Is the Rating or Marking of Character Traits Practicable?" in *Educational Method*, December, 1930.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

called character-measurement could be termed conduct-measurement. To some people, "character" means simply the visible behavior, whether good, bad, or anything whatever. To others the word is a term of praise, as when we say, "He is a man of character." So too the word "behave," may mean "behave properly," instead of merely "act." Because the two meanings are so easily confused, objections to measuring character (the ideal quality) might not apply in the same degree to measuring the overt deeds. The difference might be cleared up by a change in the name.

### ENLIGHTENED FAITH

Whatever may be said for the numerical method, the ones to busy themselves with it are not the parents or the child's teachers. The machinery is too intricate and the investigating type of mind is different from the kind needed in teaching. The reason is also indicated by the fact that some teachers are unwilling to use the traps that the investigators have devised for catching and marking the children. A detective is obliged to lay traps in order to catch criminals. There are times when, howsoever reluctantly, a principal may be obliged to call the detective to his school. But to put opportunities to cheat before children in order to mark them is something that not all teachers are ready to do. Although they want to do all they can to promote science, although they remember what objections were raised to the intelligence-tests when these were new, and although they appreciate the fact that life itself offers the children temptations more serious than the moral-testing devices of the school, they feel a rather significant reluctance, some of them, about employing these methods.

## MEASURING RESULTS

It is not that they have a blind faith in children's goodness—they know from experience that not all are angelic. They understand, too, that a genuine faith does not shut its eyes to ugly facts, but asserts itself most vitally at the point where it must first acknowledge them. It is rather that they sense in the real children with whom they live day by day (very different from the abstractions represented by the sheets over which the research student pores) something fine and deserving of all respect, even in boys and girls likely to do wrong—something, to put it bluntly, that forbids this kind of intrusion. They prefer to wait for real situations to tell them how far the children measure up to their schooling. One way to call out the higher self in people is to show them that you trust them at least long enough to refrain from artificial ways of testing exactly what percentage of trust is all they deserve. It is not surprising therefore that some teachers, face to face with the living children, prefer that the statistical moral testing be done, if at all, by those in whom the investigating interest is stronger than such scruples as here cited. The reports mention the influence of outstanding personalities among the teachers. One wonders whether the most helpful of such teachers are not likely to be those who win trust by showing trust.

Perhaps the best results likely to come from the testing procedure will be to offer a more or less rough, convenient way of comparing child with child or group with group in certain outward achievements. Fifty years from now it may be possible to know with greater precision what can be expected from each of our specific methods and from their interactions. We may reach

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

some kind of agreement as to just what we mean by character, and no less, just what kinds of character we are to breed, at just what age, how, and so on. Meanwhile, our judgments on the growth of our children must rely upon that feeling for the realities of a situation which pre-automobile days called horse sense. And no matter how precise the technique of measurement becomes, a persistent doubt will arise whether the most worth-while products of character-building are capable of mathematical definition. In the shaping of truly high-grade character, sometimes the long years bring little success, if any; and the persons who get the best efforts of parent or teacher may receive less from them than the giver himself gets from trying. The main inspiration in these endeavors is the keenly felt sense of an ideal self always out-soaring any and all attainments, a self quite disinclined to reveal itself to number-hunting. When we have added up all the scores we can still fail to know the most important fact about the child, and we can still be far from promoting our most important business.

Teaching, that is to say, is essentially a fine art. Like other arts it will welcome every possible help that science can bring. It gets its richest creative power, however, elsewhere—from a living sense of an ethical life more nobly inspired than is yet the common practice. Teachers and parents will be better craftsmen when they have better tools at their disposal. But the best of tools mean little when those who employ them lack vision. If the testing movement keeps this truth in the foreground, it can do a useful task. It can be sadly misleading when specialization in counting the measurables dims the sense of the more elusive but no less real goals at which to aim.

## CHAPTER XVII

### OUR SECOND CHANCE

O brave new world  
That has such people in it . . . !  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHENEVER people long for a changed world, their hopes turn to their children. There is an immense promise betokened by our young. They are never bored with life like adults. Their world is forever new. Their interest in it is unflagging. All the questions they can ask! People may be disillusioned and cynical about adults, occasionally doubtful about adolescents—but about young children? There is no tonic like a steady look into the face of an unspoiled child.

Hold, ye faint-hearted! Ye are not alone!  
Into your worn-out ranks of weary men  
Come mighty reinforcements, even now!  
Look where the dawn is kindling in the East,  
Brave with the glory of the better day.

We need not sentimentalize with Rousseau over the angelic perfection of children, or accept Wordsworth's reasons for believing that they trail clouds of glory. There are occasions enough when juvenile conduct strengthens our belief in original sin. But no one can have much to do with even a few young people and not believe that the qualities that normal children show under proper surroundings suggest a vast hope for this world of ours—if only those qualities can be conserved and enriched.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

### HOPEFUL APTITUDES

For example, one thing that perhaps catches the public eye most in the new education is children's æsthetic ability. Parents who remember the lifeless "drawing lessons" of former days marvel at the work of their own little children in clay, pastel, wood, paint. Any one who collects pupils' magazines from public schools will be struck at once with the feeling for color, line, composition in the children's pictures, and in the high-grade poems, stories, essays on serious subjects. The children are no more gifted to-day than they were a generation ago. Pupils in the nineteenth century were just as ready and able to sing, paint, model, write, as they are to-day. What has made the change has been the greater encouragement to develop gifts that the older schooling had little time to develop, scarcely even to recognize.

But important as these æsthetic gifts are, still more deserving of every encouragement are the ethical aptitudes. One may be gifted intellectually and artistically, but fall short of high character. The noblest work of art is a life; and for the making of this, our richest hope lies in the excellent moral potentialities we can observe in unspoiled children.

With regard to their own business, they have a keen sense of certain fundamentals of justice. "No fair" in any of their games means something. Even the toughest boy has a feeling for fair play and will resent an act of injustice, not only to himself, but to other people. The judgments that children pass upon the conduct of adults can be disconcertingly frank and sound.

They take a human interest in people. A lesson in geography for younger children is a failure when it

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

forgets how hugely interested the children are, not merely in the products or the topography of Japan, Russia, Mexico, but chiefly in the fathers and mothers, the boys and girls who live there. Race prejudice is not at all innate. Children are perfectly willing to play with boys and girls of other ancestry. The prejudices that they show later are caught from parents, from older brothers and sisters, or from companions who in their turn have been infected by elders.

The human interest carries over into genuine kindnesses. Listen to this report dictated by a group in Grade II:<sup>1</sup>

Thanksgiving time, when we were all thinking about the holiday, we decided we would like to do something for children, who, perhaps, wouldn't have a very happy time. When we were in the first grade, we bought things for our box. This year we thought it would be nice to make something ourselves. We had one glass of apple sauce and decided right away to give that. Then we talked to the cooking teacher and she said she would help us make cranberry jelly. One group worked and made one jar. Then another group made two jars. We made little samples for ourselves to see if it was good.

One morning Miss B. brought in a list and read it to us. One family had a little baby who had been very sick. We voted and decided to send our box to that family. We had a class meeting then to plan what to bring. There were three little children in the family, so we decided we should bring things that would be good for them. We planned what we needed for a dinner. We thought we should have meat, vegetables, fruit, and milk. On our trip to the vegetable market a man gave us red cabbages. The nurse said these were good for children so we put them in. We brought lots of carrots and spinach and potatoes. For dessert we brought jello and fruit. We put in tea and coffee for the mother and father, but we had milk and cocoa for the children.

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<sup>1</sup> From *School and Home*, January, 1929.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

When everything was ready we wrote letters. We said,  
"Dear ———,  
We hope you will have a happy Thanksgiving.

Grade II"

James' mother took our boxes to the families. James went with her. He told us all about it after Thanksgiving vacation. He said the little baby was all better. We were very happy.

If their own happiness is the chief motive in such acts, we can only wish that more seeking for happiness were of such a type. When people are repelled by the sight of costly pleasure-questing, expensive entertainments for jaded guests, fondness for the bizarre, and all the many other absurdities of our hectic life, a hopeful contrast is offered by the simple joys that suffice for little children. The sand pile, the blocks, the raffia, the clay for a class of twenty-five youngsters cost a relative trifle. The important thing is what the children are encouraged to do with these materials and how readily they find within themselves the resources for the best of good times. A kindergarten class had just finished its luncheon when one of the boys got up and sang a song. A girl acted out "a piece." Two children gave a dance. Quite informally two "big sisters," now members of the first grade, came in for a visit and at the invitation of the teacher, sang songs out of their new stock. Many a parent, observing with what hearty delight children enjoy these simple recreations, finds himself wondering why their tastes change so expensively later.<sup>1</sup>

### NEITHER ANGELS NOR IMPS

What about the misbehaved? Those who are alarmed at the behaviors of some among the younger generation

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller treatment of this topic, see the author's "Natural and Acquired Promptings" in *Education for Moral Growth*.

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

forget that misconduct is usually more conspicuous than the other kind, exactly as it is the scandals and crimes, not the daily rectitudes, that get into the newspapers. In the colleges there are more boys and girls reading, working in the laboratory, enjoying wholesome recreation, working for public causes, than one would ever suppose from the comics or the sensational stories.

Besides, when the young people deliberately avow a philosophy of conduct that startles their elders, it is well to remember that every revolt thrives upon the offenses and the omissions of the régime which it is opposing. The children of this generation have been looking into the world of their elders and finding out many things about that world that are most unlovely. They are not so ready to take for granted that home life, business, politics, moral codes, as accepted by their parents now, are the last word in human evolution. With unpleasant frankness they are asking the older ones, "Are you so sure that in your practice even more than in your codes you yourselves are making good?" What is wrong with some of our young people, it has been said, is that they are finding out too quickly what is wrong with their elders.

"Some" young people, we must repeat. Generalization is unsafe. The better traits we have mentioned are not found in the same degree in all. Many parents wish that their children were thoughtful enough to work out any philosophy whatever, even of disillusion. What hurts is the sheer indifference, the frivolity, and worse.

The poorer types of behavior do indeed appear in children who once gave all the promise betokened by their early curiosity, creativeness, and fine feeling. How does it happen that children who sang, recited, acted

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

spontaneously, and heartily enjoyed the simple literature will read *As You Like It* in high school listlessly, and later read only trash? Or the children who in grade one responded readily to the teacher's plea for sympathy with a handicapped classmate and showed him every courtesy and encouragement, can haze and torment then and later; they can leave college or high school with their lend-a-hand impulses almost atrophied.

Perhaps the difficulty is, as suggested earlier in these pages, that our knowledge of individual psychology is still much less complete than we like to think. We do not know yet just what specific training will fit each specific need. And even if we knew, we may not care to take the necessary trouble, or be able to do so. The promises of childhood are promises only to the extent that the gifts are developed, and developed unceasingly all along the line. The rich hope requires cultivation unending.

The failures need not therefore confirm the belief that human nature is ineradicably prone to evil or silliness. Wickedness is no more natural than goodness. Children are born neither imps nor angels. They are born, it would seem, with potentialities for all kinds of behavior, with everything depending on the direction in which these are turned. Children from the most unpromising homes have turned out splendid men and women. Children from the better homes have disappointed—for reasons not always discoverable. But even with such defective knowledge and disposition as are now ours, our main reliance must be to watch for every worth-while trait and to provide it unceasingly with every possible encouragement. Once upon a time it was deemed a sign of wickedness when children scribbled on the walls. Today we turn the impulse into work in art.

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

This is different from simply looking for the good in children and blinding ourselves to the shortcomings. It is looking for every promise in them and trying to make it so grow in them as to replace what is worse. A little boy beams with pride when he is praised for being honest. At thirteen or seventeen any such public praise will make him squirm. He knows that his classmates suspect the quality of an act for which public commendation is one of the returns. And yet one of the strongest motives to keep him from cheating in examination must be a feeling that is akin to this very pride. At its best it is a secret unwillingness to lower his self-respect by sneaking out of the consequences of his conduct. Pity that this outgrowth of an earlier promise is not more widely encouraged.

Cultivation is essential. The earlier better aptitudes are merely so much raw material, valuable only as they are worked over into higher forms. Children are quite ready to please others, whether or not chiefly for the sake of the approving smile, who can say? But make the best of what readiness there is. Out of this trait must come the intelligent public spirit of the mature citizen, the wise philanthropy, the just treatment of others that may often be much harder than being kind to a grateful sufferer.

In all this working-over of native capacities, we need to appeal to the highest possible of the creative desires. The motive is everything. The threat of law can offer a certain help, but it is exceedingly limited. The need is for something much more affirmative and much more appealing than the external coercion which is all that the law (if enforced) can apply. The most effective restraint is self-imposed, and even such restraint itself

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

is only part of the story. To be exercised at all, it requires its own positive motives. A sensible man who has an important job to perform keeps away from liquor because he knows it will befuddle his hand or brain. He does not need the policeman; he has the best of reasons for being his own guardian; and he understands how the freedom most worth the having is the liberty that he gets to go ahead with his work.

### TRAINING TEACHERS

Heavy responsibilities thus rest upon the older generation. Some of these demands upon parents and community have already been mentioned. A word may be offered here upon the special requirements for teachers.

In one sense there is no special technique required for the work of character training. Every interest that broadens the outlook of the teacher or in any other way contributes to the elevating of personality in him, is that much to the good in his profession. Hence, there is much to be gained, for example, from a richer knowledge of the subjects taught than many teachers now possess. Some are unaware what abundant moral values there are in geography or history or science, because their own acquaintance with these subjects lacks ripeness and love. Necessary as courses in methods are, still greater is the need for an ampler culture—as more and more normal schools are showing by becoming four-year colleges. Whereas it is true that the teacher, as distinguished from the specialist, is expected to be interested mainly in the children rather than in the matter to be taught, teaching in these United States will move ahead faster when the teachers themselves are better educated persons. Many a lover of nature who has never taken a

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

single course in pedagogy is able to arouse and to feed an interest that teachers better trained but less informed about nature (or possibly less enthusiastic) cannot get. In general, teachers will mean more to their pupils and be able to offer more of the moral help there is in enriched life interests, when their own reservoirs are fuller.

Ideally, it would also be expected that in view of the supreme importance of the ethical motive in education, all teachers without exception be students of ethics. Although this subject as handled in some college courses is often very dry and academic, it can be made one of the most fruitful in the whole curriculum.<sup>1</sup> It can invite the student to share the reflections of the world's keenest intellects upon the fundamental problems of human life and destiny. It can help him to interpret his own problems in the light of whatever he finds helpful in these experiences of more mature minds.

All teachers likewise need courses on to-day's social problems. Character is shaped best in the attempt of people to remold their environment on nobler patterns. What social conditions interfere with the emergence of the best life in men, women, and children? What challenges to the creative energies do these offer? Especially what place has the school among the other forces for reconstruction? How is it influenced by the children's housing, their parents' work conditions, the political life of the community, immigration, race attitudes, the peace movement, to-day's changing family life? What can the school contribute toward the meeting of

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<sup>1</sup> For recommendation on this head see the author's chapter "Ethics" in P. Klapper, *College Teaching* (World Book Co.). See also H. H. Horne, "History of Education" in the same volume.

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

these problems? All teachers need to know far more than most now know about the burning social questions of our age. The chief obstacle that progress here encounters is not human badness, but indifference. Not enough people see the needs or care to know them. That is why many a good cause must struggle along on contributions of dimes and quarters, where other appeals, less deserving, get the big sums. Those who are teaching the builders of the future should be the first to feel the needs and get light upon them.

But teachers, like other folk, vary in their loves and interests. Some are more enthusiastic than others about the moral values to be striven for in their occupation. For these the training for work in character-building will include the broad education expected of the others and in addition certain special requirements.

They will study the present stage of man's ethical development in the light of its long and checkered past. They will know something of the history of moral practices and of the ethical philosophies that went with these. What light is thus shed on the ethical problems of to-day? Particularly when in many quarters the accent is now put upon change, and college students grow aware how often morality is only the peculiar custom of some one time and region, a thorough study of the problems raised by this fact can do much good. What is custom? What is conventional morality? What do we mean by right and wrong? Granted that morals change, what is there that stays and that deserves to stay? Or granted that human motives are a mixture of high, low, and in-between, what has been done in the past to encourage the higher? What can still be done? What is the dif-

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

ference between change and progress? Apply these considerations to typical problems of personal and group conduct to-day.

Practice is essential. In view of the fact that the true teacher of ethics cannot coerce but must lead, it is invaluable experience to lead a club where attendance is uncomelled. If it is good training for a public speaker to speak outdoors where auditors who lose interest move on freely, it is beneficial for teachers to have pupils who are perfectly free to walk out. Long ago educators saw that the use of the rod spoiled the teacher by exempting him from any need to improve his methods. Every teacher, and particularly the ones who specialize in character-training, should learn to handle classes or clubs where the only coercion is that exercised by the genuine interest of the members.

Of more than ordinary benefit is such work among groups where problems of maladjustment are acute. For instance, the usual problem of clash between child and parent is complicated where the parents are immigrants. What can be done to bring the older and the younger together? Or how can persons of varying religion, nationality, race, be harmonized? Or what can be done to set delinquents on the right paths? Work in clubs or settlements where these questions are foremost has its special importance for the teacher. Out of the successes, he learns in a new fashion how there operates in people a moral power that raises some of them above the most unfriendly of outward circumstances. From the failures the teacher may be helped to grasp, without necessarily losing hope, something of the bigness of the problem. Why do people fail? What can a better social order do for such folk? Why, for that matter, do people fail

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

who do not live in slums? What light can the psychologist give us? The clinician?

There is ample work for teachers who want their profession to offer its best contribution. So high is the demand that teachers who are asked to direct clubs or to take Sunday classes will sometimes plead that for so serious a business they are quite unfitted. They are partly right. The more seriously we conceive the aim of character education, the more we appreciate how little fit anybody is to promote it. In the strictest sense, nobody is fit to be a parent either. But partial fitness at any rate is learned by lifelong practice; and one step toward the learning is to appreciate how necessary it is. A whole world is to be remade for the better, to-day, to-morrow, in endless years ahead. The true teacher is the one who feels the need and wants to do his full share toward meeting it by means of his daily work and by every experience that will make that work more effective.

### LOOK TO THE END

The supreme aim must therefore be kept with all vividness before the minds of teachers and parents no less than before the children's. What are we to make of the gifts, in all their endless variety and profusion, with which past and present have endowed us? Ordinarily we are not tempted, most of us, to commit the grosser outrages. More often are we tempted, let it be repeated, either to waste our lives in triviality or to live parasitically at the expense of those who do the good work of the world, without adding our own. It makes all the difference what we keep foremost as the thing to be striven for. We can have our youth go through life with eyes open for every chance to grab what they can

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

get and without a thought of whether, wittingly or not, they are hurting other lives or neglecting their share of the collective business. We can, on the other hand, have them scorn to live on such terms. We can train them from their earliest years to know in their hearts that the best way to square their accounts with life honorably is to do their full share in promoting the march of mankind upward.

The meaning of this they will understand better with the years, as we help them to follow the light that shines from the best life in people. The way we look at our fellow beings is fundamental. It decides how we shall treat them; and it determines what we shall think of ourselves; for we rise or fall together in the estimate we put upon that selfhood which we all share. So it is that the image of what is best in people and most deserving of ascendancy in human affairs, must be kept bright and increasingly clear.

If people were mere things, it would make no difference at bottom how we lived with them or treated them. Things can be made, destroyed, remade; and in the long run, so far as the things themselves are concerned, it is of slight consequence how they are treated. Mere things have no life objects of their own that we can thwart by our selfishness or promote by our coöperation. But human beings?

The more we can feel this suggestion of something higher than gross usefulness to ourselves, the more we come into the presence of that which calls forth our utmost respect. We can with little scruple throw away a pair of worn-out shoes. Its usefulness to us has been ended, and that is all there is to the matter. We can also throw away a beautiful flower. But this we are not

## LIVES IN THE MAKING

quite so ready to destroy, even though its beauty has faded. In its fragrance and in its coloring, there is a suggestion of something altogether too fine to be treated thus casually. With the poet we feel that the thing of beauty deserves a love almost akin to worship. And how much more compellingly does that suggestion of something profoundly to respect touch us when we look at human souls! Above the failures that persons exhibit, see the men and women they might be at their noblest—even those unpleasant persons to whom we may not naturally be drawn. Here is what we can regard with religious reverence; for there is no limit to the grandeur which, at their ideal best, men can reach. Before that latent excellence in them, all the false distinctions of race and caste, of station, learning and breeding, pass away, all the self-calculations that make us look on others solely with an eye to their use or disuse to ourselves. This worth, this fundamental greatness in the sight of the purest of good-will, all of us need to feel, to understand, and to honor increasingly.

When we say therefore that character building should be the main objective for home, school, community, we mean much more than teaching little children to stop lying, or to "succeed" without hurting others. Certain superlatively worth-while creations are to grow in the garden of the human mind; a more ideal type of person is to inhabit this globe of ours; and teachers, parents, boys, girls, young and old, all together are to give meaning to their lives in the effort to make these potential grandeurs actual. There is an ampler justice than people have yet done to one another, a richer, warmer charity

## OUR SECOND CHANCE

than the world has yet achieved. To become conscious of oneself as a being capable of a part in promoting this object is to become aware of what is most genuinely oneself. The best help we can give our youth to find themselves is to aid them to exercise that creative self-fulfillment that honors the selves most worth respecting in all.

A teacher with unusual power to inspire young lives wrote these words:<sup>1</sup>

Some years ago when I asked a young man to tell me what in all his reading and study had been the most impressive thing he had ever met with, he said Mendelief's Table of Atomic Weights. The answer interested me very much because this same table many years before had impressed me. It brought home the fact to me that this material world of ours is built out of laws of periodicity which can be known and dealt with so definitely that other scientists like Mendelief can predict the existence of substances that have never yet been found, can know the existence of planets in our solar system that have never yet been seen. . . .

I like to believe that there is yet another possibility: that just as the scientist by virtue of the facts and laws which he has learned through his study and observation can predict the existence of substances which have never appeared, so the student, informed as to moral facts and initiated into the finer ways of living, may have the power to perceive the possibility of greater good than has ever yet appeared and be helpful in making this greater good a reality.

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<sup>1</sup> John L. Elliott, in *School and Home* (Parents and Teachers Association, Ethical Culture School), January, 1929.



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## INDEX

- Acton, Lord, 115  
*Adam Bede*, 48  
Adams, James T., 77  
Adams, John, 73  
Addams, Jane, 30, 75  
Adler, Felix, 23, 57, 95, 105, 120,  
    326  
Adolescence, 28 ff., 34, 47, 153 ff.,  
    168 ff., 242, 262, 277 ff., 341  
Agassiz, Louis, 90  
à Kempis, Thomas, 229  
Aldrich, Bess S., 259  
Appreciation, 61, 114, 124, 264,  
    266, 268, 287  
Arnold, M., 119  
Art-studies, 248 ff., 338  
Athletics, 207 ff., 256
- Baha, Abdu'l, 126  
Bailey, Liberty H., 293  
Baxter, Richard, 139  
Beard, Charles A., 90, 287  
Beauty, 67 ff., 90, 249 ff., 312, 338  
Bennett, Arnold, 247  
Billings, Josh, 32  
Biography, 48, 241, 258, 261, 269,  
    296, 297 ff.  
Bismarck, Prince, 199  
Blackwell, Elizabeth, 52  
Bode, Boyd H., 57  
Bridges, Horace J., 307  
Bryce, James, 213  
Burke, Edmund, 115, 264, 274,  
    284  
Byrd, Richard, 245
- Canfield, Dorothy, 48  
Carlyle, Thomas, 19, 35, 83, 120,  
    262, 280  
Carnegie Foundation, 209  
Case-studies, 145 ff.
- Cather, Willa, 48, 125  
Child labor, 70, 71  
Chubb, Percival, 258  
Civics, 73, *see* history and civi-  
    ics  
Cleveland Schools Report, 125,  
    216, 217, 240  
Coeducation, 52 ff.  
Community, responsibility of, 58;  
    civic pride and the, 66 ff.,  
    103 ff., 109  
Composition, 265 ff.  
Conflicts and complexes, 144 ff.  
Counts, George S., 6, *note*  
Creative living, 85 ff.  
Crime, 71, 75, 76, 79, 299  
Cromwell, Oliver, 278  
Culture, 5, 6, 96 ff., 179, 249 ff.,  
    312  
Curie, Marie S., 297  
Curriculum: using the given  
    studies, 247 ff.  
Cuthbert, Edith O., 20, 153 *note*,  
    165, 173
- Darwin, Charles, 27, 296  
Daudet, Alphonse, 237  
*David Copperfield*, 48  
Davis, James J., 72  
Deardorff, Neva R., 61  
Delinquency, *see* Crime  
Democracy, 25 ff., 38, 68, 73, 95,  
    97, 106, 195 ff., 212 ff., 219 ff.,  
    226, 227, 251, 281, 284, 300  
Dickens, Charles, 107, 255  
Disillusion, 242, 261, 277 ff.  
Doll, Edgar A., 153 *note*  
Dramatics, 210, 240
- Eddington, Arthur S., 309  
Einstein, Albert, 291

## INDEX

- Eliot, George, 228, 259  
 Elliott, John L., 203, 237, 351  
 Emerson, Ralph W., Preface, 27,  
     39, 180, 239  
 Equality, 54, 166 *ff.*, 174, 176  
 Erasmus, 86  
 Estabrooks, G. J., 144  
 Ethical Culture Society, 131  
  
 Faraday, Michael, 295  
 Fathers, education for, 19 *ff.*, 39,  
     72, *see* Homes  
 Faust, J. W., 33  
 Festivals and plays, 132  
 Fishbein, Morris, 191  
     *note*, 133  
 Fisher, Dorothy C., *see* Canfield  
 Folks, Homer, 80  
 Follett, Mary, 219  
 Ford, Henry, 195 *note*, 249  
 Foreign languages, 263  
 Fosdick, Raymond, 276  
 Foster, W. T., and Catchings,  
     W., 92  
 Fraternities, 225  
 Freedom, academic, Preface,  
     113 *ff.*  
 Freud, Sigmund, 144, 166  
 Froebel, Friedrich, 180  
 Frost, Robert, 23, 43, 257  
  
 Galsworthy, John, 241, 260  
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 90  
 Gardner, Ella, 63  
 Garett, Garet, 256  
 Garland, Hamlin, 259  
 Geography, moral values in,  
     268 *ff.*, 338  
 Gibran, Kahlil, 228  
 Gibson, Wilfrid W., 258  
 Gillingham, Anna, 174  
 Goddard, Henry, 153 *note*  
 Goethe, 55  
 Grenfell, Wilfred, 197  
 Gruenberg, Benjamin C., 300  
  
 Hale, Edward E., 256  
 Hardy, Thomas, 48, 56, 261  
 Hartshorne, Hugh, 318 *ff.*, 330  
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 48, 244  
 Health, 69 *ff.*  
 Hightower, Pleasant P., 318  
 History and Civics, 73; moral  
     values in, 273 *ff.*; problems of  
     to-day, 277 *ff.*; methods, 281 *ff.*;  
     correlations, 292  
 Homes, why effective as moral  
     agencies, 19, 22 *ff.*, 46, 55;  
     problem-homes, 20 *ff.*, 145 *ff.*,  
     162; changing to-day, 24, 25,  
     61 *ff.*; new demands of par-  
     ents, 26 *ff.*; confidence in par-  
     ents still needed, 31 *ff.*; sex-  
     instruction, 40 *ff.*; recreation  
     in, 61; war and, 78 *ff.*; home-  
     economics, 88, 92  
 Honor system, 215  
 Hoover, Herbert, 69  
 Horne, Herman H., 345  
 Howe, Frederick C., 76  
 Hugo, Victor, 263  
 Huxley, Thomas H., 295  
  
 Individual differences, 164; cases,  
     145 *ff.*; clinical study of,  
     165 *ff.*; the different normal,  
     173 *ff.*  
 Ingersoll, Robert, 60  
 Intelligence tests, 174, 175  
 Interest and effort, 190 *ff.*; *see*  
     also Motives  
 Interests, varying with age, 183;  
     as ways of displacing other  
     interests, 185 *ff.*; related to  
     freedom and democracy, 195  
 Irving, Washington, 107  
*Ivanhoe*, 47  
  
 Jacks, Lawrence P., 82, 304  
 James, William, 84, 236  
 Jefferson, Thomas, 277  
 Jennings, Herbert S., 300, 308

## INDEX

- Judge Baker Foundation, 140
- Kant, Immanuel, 232, 235, 328
- Keats, John, 325
- Kemp, Harry, 291
- Kingsley, Charles, 258
- Kipling, R., 236, 255, 256, 317
- Klapper, Paul, 345
- Lazear, Dr. Jesse, 86
- Lessing, Ephraim, 263
- Lindbergh, Charles A., 177, 192, 256
- Lister, Joseph, 296
- Literature, moral values in, 253; dangers in moralizing, 254; methods of approach, 255 ff.; reading for joy, 262; foreign literatures, 263
- Longfellow, Henry W., 257, 263
- Lowell, James R., 10, 289
- Macaulay, Thomas B., 257
- McCormick, Cyrus, 37
- Maller, Julius B., 319 ff.
- Man and animal, 56, 261, 350 ff., 312
- Mann, Horace, 8
- Markham, Edward H., 1
- Marriage, meaning of, 43; preparation for, 45; examples of success in, 48
- Masters, Edgar L., 268
- Mathematics, relation to science, 308; moral values, 309; methods, 310, 330
- May, Mark A., 318 ff.
- Mental hygiene, 139 ff.; the new hope, 140; a study for teachers, 141; cases, 145 ff.; treatment for teachers and parents, 162; clinical study, 165 ff.; *see Conflicts*
- Merriam, Charles E., 73
- Michelangelo, 26
- Mill, John S., 7
- Miller, Joaquin, 265
- Milton, John, 58, 184
- Moneymaking, 5, 6, 11, 76 ff.; 90, 103
- Moral education, aims in, 3, 4, 11, 15, 38, 103, 135, *see Motives*; obstacles, 6, 11, 47, 59 ff., 62, 69, 73 ff., 79, 114, 172; direct methods, 40, 125; indirect methods, 24, 55, 81 ff., 132, 181 ff., 203 ff.
- Moral instruction, 228; objections to, 229; value of direct, scheduled courses, 231 ff.; need of specific objectives and general principles, 233 ff.; stories and other material, 236 ff.; methods, 239 ff., 255 ff.; inspirations, 244
- Morgan, Arthur E., 113
- Morgan, De Witt, 241
- Morton, David, 247
- Motives, 4, 15, 42, 43, 51, 103, 111, 112, 132 ff., 184, 190 ff., 245, 328, 343 ff., 348, 350
- Movies, 62, 264
- Munson, Gorham B., 43
- Murray, Gilbert, 264
- Muzzey, David S., 114, 286
- Nast, Thomas, 89
- National Education Association Report, 115
- Nature study, moral values without moralizing, 291; relation to civics, 292
- Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 48
- Pahlow, Edwin H., 285
- Paine, Albert B., 89
- Parents and children, 19 ff.; *see Homes*
- Pasteur, Louis, 99
- Patri, Angelo, 333
- Pendennis*, 48

## INDEX

- Pestalozzi, Heinrich, 8, 180  
 Plato, 68, 232, 311, 329  
 Privacy, 23, 29, 40, 326  
 Private schools, Preface, 128,  
     190, 204, *note*  
 Progress, 117 *f.*  
 Propaganda, 115 *f.*, 285, 288,  
     300
- Recreation, 33, 61 *f.*, 66, 82  
 Red Cross, 207  
 Religious education, value, 119 *f.*;  
     dangers, 121; respect for different, 124; relation to social problems, 126 *f.*; basis in ethical training, 129 *f.*; methods, 132 *f.*
- Riis, Jacob, 66  
 Robertson, Frederick W., 130  
 Robbins, Phyllis, 267  
 Robinson, Edward A., 253  
 Rolvaag, Ole, 259  
 Rousseau, Jean J., 183, 232, 337  
 Ruskin, John, 81
- Sadi, 234  
*Scarlet Letter*, 48, 49  
 Schopenhauer, Arthur, 232  
 Schurz, Carl, 199  
 Science; moral values, 294 *f.*;  
     relations to civics, 292, 296, 299; biographies, 297 *f.*; methods, 301; misuses, 302 *f.*
- Scott, Walter, 255, 257  
 Self-expression, 56, 57, 144,  
     196 *f.*  
 Self-government, 212 *f.*; opportunities, 216 *f.*; obstacles, 218 *f.*; relation to group services, 223 *f.*, 281
- Shakespeare, 203, 259, 278, 337  
 Sherman, Stuart P., 245, 248  
 Sidney, Philip, 254  
*Silas Marner*, 48
- Smith, Henry L., 215 *note*  
 Social obstacles and social instrumentalities, *see* Community  
 Social remaking, 3, 8, 58 *f.*; as ethical motive, preface, 105 *f.*, 110, 117  
 Social services, 206, 223, 339  
 Socrates, 232, 329  
 Stillman, Bessie W., 204  
 Story-telling, 237, 325  
 Strode, Muriel, 19  
 Studying, ways of, 203 *f.*
- Teachers, 9, 141, 163, 277, 344 *f.*  
 Tennyson, Alfred, 256, 257  
 Terrett, Courtenay, 76  
 Tests and measurements, 317 *f.*;  
     why advocated, 319; dangers, 322 *f.*; inability to measure motives, 325 *f.*; relation to behaviorist psychology, 329; difference between testing and teaching, 334  
 Training teachers, 344 *f.*; special courses, 346; practice, 347  
 Twain, Mark, 74, 107, 254, 272  
*Twist, Oliver*, 13
- Untermeyer, Louis, 258
- Van Loon, Hendrik W., 304  
 Virtues as tools, 13 *f.*
- War, 79 *f.*, 85, 99, 270, 276, 285, 303  
 White, William A., 191  
 Whitehead, Alfred N., 233, 295  
 Wickman, E. K., 141  
 Williams, Frankwood, 139  
 Work, as character builder, 63, 81 *f.*; as "moral equivalent of war," 85 *f.*; relation to culture, 96 *f.*; preparations for, 87 *f.*; relation to mental hygiene, 179







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